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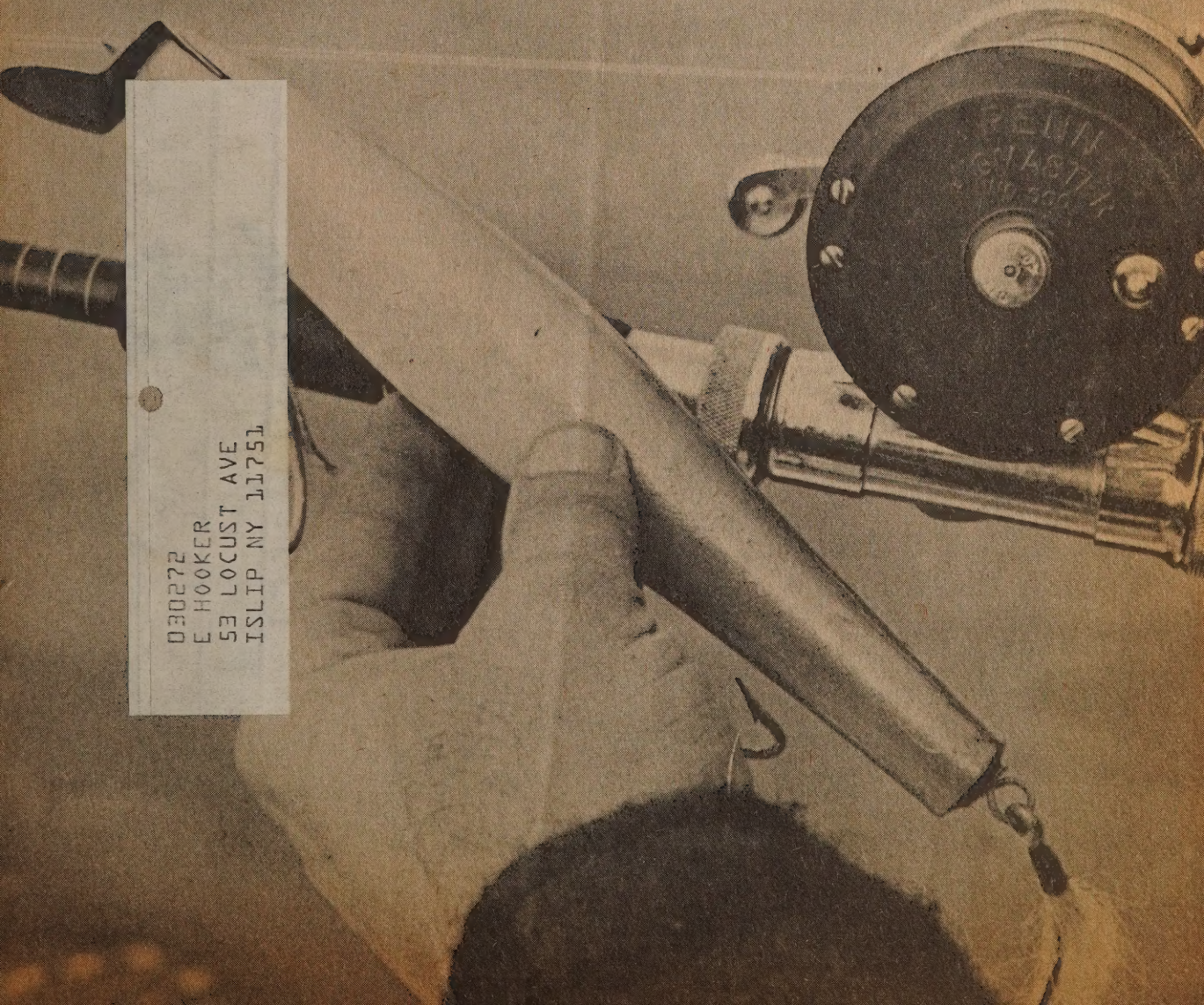

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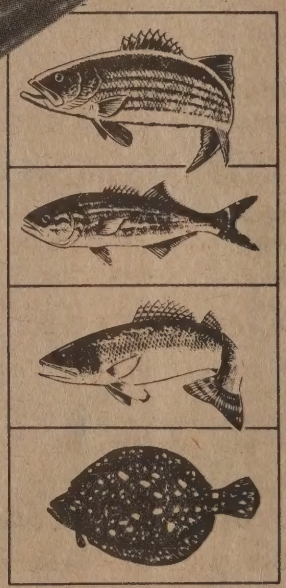

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There is a special satisfaction associated with landing a large game fish on a plug. Especially on one you've made yourself! Learn how on page 16.

COMING NEXT WEEK: **LONG ISLAND BOAT SHOW ISSUE**

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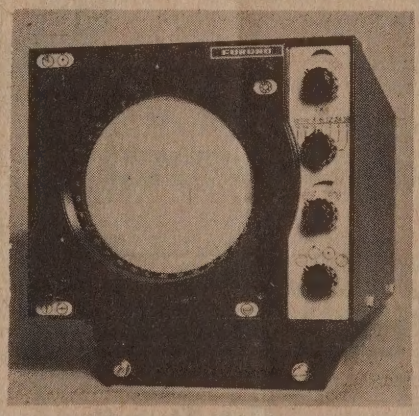

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Pass It On...

SWORDFISH TOURNEY PROCEEDS DONATED TO SOUTHAMPTON COLLEGE

The Shinnecock Marlin and Tuna Club recently donated the proceeds of their annual Swordfish Tournament to Southampton College of Long Island University. The $1,000 donation will be used to purchase marine science publications which will be placed in the Southampton College Library's non-circulating reference collection, open to students and the general public.

The 400-member club headquarters at the Indian Cove Marina in Hampton Bays has members from as far west as Great Neck. In addition to the annual Swordfish Tournament held each July, the club holds numerous inter-club tournaments.

Ronald "Bud" Maloney of Hampton Bays, President of the club, and Captain Joseph Disigni of Hampton Bays, tournament chairman, recently visited President Donald W. Wilson at Southampton College and presented him with the donation.

"It's common knowledge that the College has a good Marine Science Department," explained Captain Disigni. "We are happy to have these students here, working on oceanography in this area, so we decided to give the money where it would benefit them."

ELECTIONS HELD BY AMITY HARBOR FISHING CLUB

The Amity Harbor Fishing Club, organizers for the yearly "Chopper Roundup," recently held elections of officers for 1981. Results are: Norm Zenke, President; George Osipowich, Vice President; Al Giglio, Secretary, and Joe Diange, Treasurer.

The Club has room for new members and anybody interested can contact: Norm Zenke at 842-2150.

BRONSON OWNER LOOKING FOR HELP

Reader John DoJahn has an old Bronson 420L and hasn't been able to find parts for it. Bronson has been out of business for a long time, but John likes his reel and only needs a left side plate to fix it. Anyone who can help should contact John at 549 N. 12th Street, New Hyde Park, NY 11040.

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Trim lite is marketed by North American Offshore, Inc., manufacturer of the NA-40, and is sold through boat dealers and marine suppliers.

For additional information contact: North American Offshore Inc., 840 W. Milwaukee, Detroit, Michigan 48402

NEW 3M BROCHURE OFFERS TIPS ON SELECTION OF FLY LINES

Information that can help fly fishing enthusiasts match proper fly lines to types of fishing and tackle are contained in a new color-illustrated brochure available from Scientific Anglers/3M.

The brochure, entitled "The Right Fly Line For You," offers a step-by-step approach to choosing proper fly lines. It includes information on balancing of equipment, line weight and coding systems, performance capabilities of each type of taper, color selection, sink rates and selection of line weights.

Copies may be obtained by sending Fifty Cents to: Scientific Anglers/3M, Dept. LT80-30, P.O. Box 33984, St. Paul, MN 55144.

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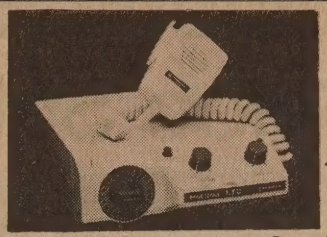

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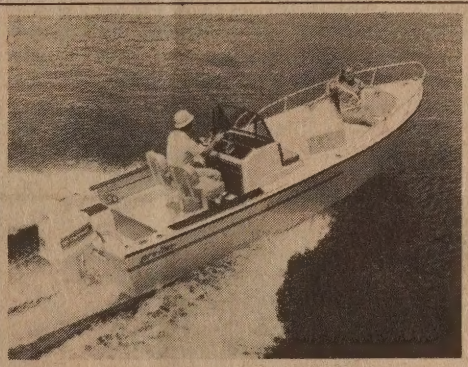

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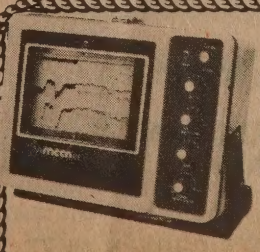

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NATIONAL SCENE

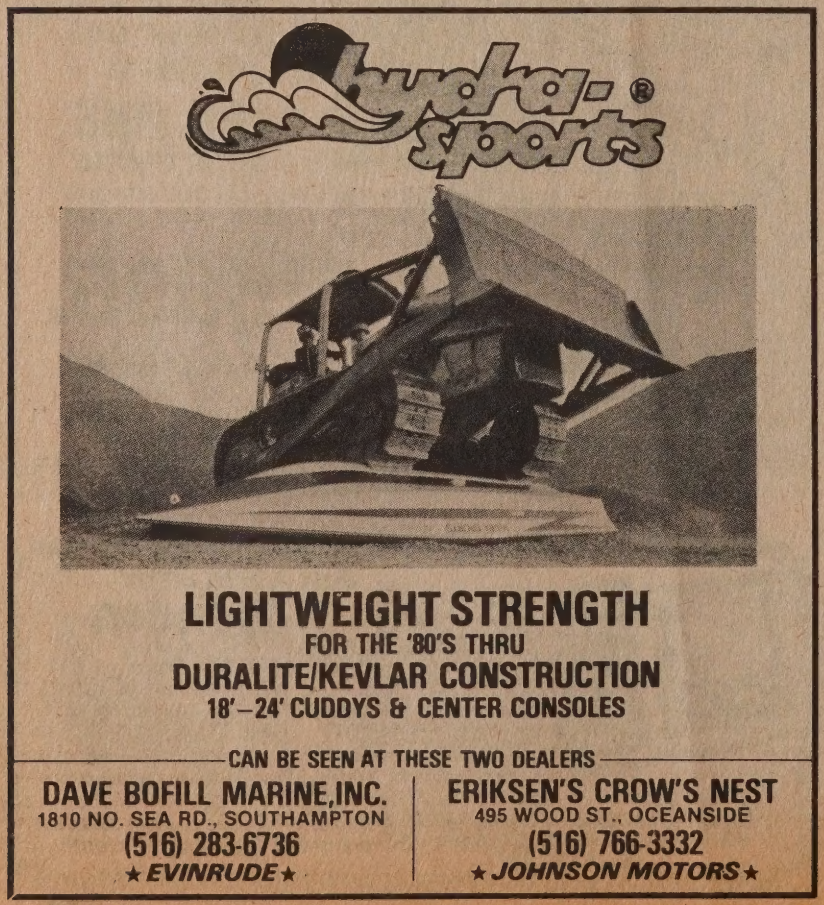
Michelob Schooner Awards

by Al Ristori

New York Congressman Mario Biaggi is this year's recipient of the August A. Busch, III Boating Safety "Michelob Schooner" award. That honor was presented to Biaggi on the eve of this year's 71st National Boat Show in New York by co-sponsors Paul Lapotosky of Anheuser-Busch and Admiral John B. Hayes of the Coast Guard.

Congressman Biaggi is author of the Recreational Boating Safety and Facilities Improvement Act of 1980, more popularly known as the Biaggi Bill. Passed laast fall, that bill establishes a fund of $20 million per year from motor boat fuel tax collections for fiscal 1981, 1982 and 1983. The Coast Guard will administer the fund and is authorized to retain $1.5 million ($500,000 per year) to finance Federal boating improvement projects and cover administration costs. The remaining $58.5 million will be available to states on a fifty/fifty matching basis for development and implementation of boating safety and facilities programs.

Mario Biaggi has long been a friend of the marine sportsman. In 1976, the Emergency Committee to Save America's Marine Resources honored him (along with Congressmen Norm Lent, Ed Forsythe, and Matt Rinaldo) for his efforts on behalf of the 200-Mile Limit legislation. A long-time influential member of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, Biaggi will move up this year from his chairmanship of the subcommittee dealing with boating and the Coast Guard to vice-chairman of the full committee. Despite the election defeat of former chairman John Murphy, the Metropolitan area will have plenty of clout in that committee as long as Mario Biaggi is around!



Japanese Longliners Have Poor December

According to the NMFS Southeast Observer News, twenty-one Japanese longliners fishing the Atlantic Fishery Conservation Zone in December experienced very poor catch rates as compared with previous months. Working in areas from 100 miles east of Norfolk, Virginia to 150 miles southeast of Nantucket, they hooked about 8,000 tunas, 6,000 sharks, 1,500 billfish, and 13,000 of other species. Of the tunas, 47% were albacore and 41% bigeyes. Swordfish dominated the billfish catch, over 60% of which came up dead—about average for the Atlantic fisheries last year. Shark mortality, which had been only about 10%, was closer to 20% in December. About half of the "other species" (all species other than the tunas must be cut loose by the Japanese) also came up dead.

For the year, the Japanese accounted for over 50,000 tuna in the Atlantic and more than 20,000 in the Gulf. In the course of catching those tuna they hooked about 8,000 billfish in the Atlantic and almost as many in the Gulf. Over 60% of the Atlantic billfish (mostly swordfish) came up dead, and the mortality rate in the Gulf was almost 80%! Though NMFS doesn't provide a breakdown by species or sizes, it would be hard to dispute the fact that the economic loss to the United States of the swordfish killed in this process is in the millions. Well over 30,000 sharks were hooked in the Atlantic, but only a few thousand in the Gulf. The mortality rate in the Atlantic was only slightly over 10%, while it ran about 25% in the warm waters of the Gulf. The "other species" catch ran over 45,000 in the Atlantic and only about 5,000 in the Gulf of Mexico. Mortality was in the 55% range in both cases.

It should be noted that the mortality figures I'm providing reflect only the fish that come up dead. Additional mortality is certain among those which are released while still alive. Of course, every fish we save in this fashion is one more available to domestic sport and commercial fisheries—and for perpetuation of the species. However, it is very hard to justify the destruction of so many valuable fish in our waters by a foreign fishery which takes other valuable species free of charge. Though the general philosophy of the

(Continued on page 28.)

TACKLE DOCTOR

Reel Maintenance — Part Two

It's amazing how many fishermen will take great care of their boats, beach buggies or the family car, waxing the paint thin with zealous effort; yet they virtually ignore their fishing tackle. "A squirt with the hose, a drop of oil and it's ready to go," they think. That concept is wrong!

They are behind the eight-ball right away if they simply wash off the reels with water. A heavy stream of water from a hose will wash off the external salt build-up, but also forces lots of salts into the inside of the reel. The water pushes sand particles intc springs, line guides, drag parts and even the gears, to cause eventual failure of some part of the reel.

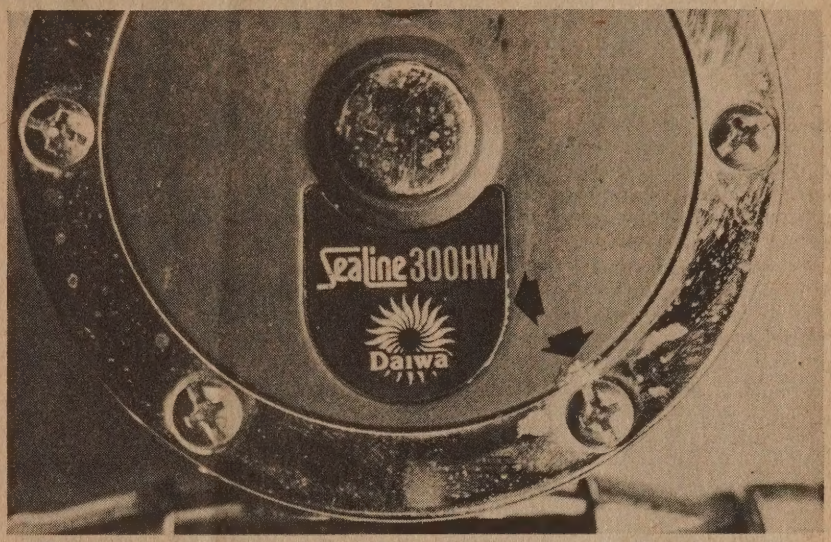
One of the accompanying photos shows a closeup of a side plate on a Daiwa 300HW that was purposely left unwashed for two days. Salt corrosion began to build at several spots which, if left uncleaned for any length of time, would have caused the chromed rings to rust and corrode until they would be eaten away and pitted. As mentioned above, a heavy freshwater washing would remove the surface corrosion, but force some of the salts under the ring only to begin corrosion hidden from your eye. Months later a bubble in the chrome would grow to a hole, loss of the ring and possible damage to the side plate.

You can use water on your reels, but use it only as a fine spray to moisturize the dried salts and fish scales. Do NOT *use a hard spray. Hold the hose two or more feet from the reels and lightly wash the reel. Then wipe the excess water with a clean, old towel.*

Use a spray oil like CRC, WD-40 or TriFlon to apply a de-moisturizing and light lubricating coating to all external surfaces. The spray will force the water from the crevices around side plate rings, click buttons, anti-reverse levers, handle knobs, bail springs and line guides. Instead of allowing the salts to "hide" in these tight, concealed places, these special oils neutralize the corrosive effects of the salts and prevent any damage.

After spraying with oil, wipe the reel down again with a clean towel. Additional spray or light oil may be applied to parts like handle knobs, line guides, bail springs and level wind mechanisms.

Back off the drag knob or star wheel to relieve tension on the washers. A tight drag adjustment left for a week or more can ruin the drag by excessively flattening the washers. Some washers, like asbestos, will actually bind right to the metal washers if left tightened for too long a time.



This reel was purposely left uncleaned for two days to show how salts build up on high quality reels. Neutralizing spray oils cure this problem.

A light coating of quality grease assures trouble-free operation of gears, anti-reverse parts, handles and coats internal surfaces against salt corrosion.

Depending on how frequently you fish, it is helpful to establish a preventive maintenance system. Take your reels apart, or at least visually inspect them on a regular basis. Open the side plates to inspect for any water or salt build-up on internal parts. Light re-lubing may be necessary if the reel has been fished hard.

We've stressed the idea of lubrication of internal parts, but we must caution against over-lubing. Too much grease can be harmful, too, by attracting and holding onto sand particles, dirt and gumming up the parts. A light coating is all that is necessary for a good functioning reel.

Your collection of fishing reels represents an investment of your hard earned bucks. They deserve reasonable care to operate efficiently for many years of good service.

FISH TALK

Marine Pollution Problems

by William A. Muller

SUSPENSE! Perhaps last week we left you in suspense, but I prefer to think that we whetted your appetite for this week's column. We refer to an article sent to us by Anthony Schiavello. The article was entitled "How The Sea Cleans Itself." Until recently, it was generally believed that marine pollution was irreversible. This point of view was supported by public statements made by men of considerable prestige in marine science as perceived by the public. Jacques Cousteau, for example, has repeatedly warned that the oceans will be dead before the middle of the next century and that the Mediterranean Sea was dying. Then, too, Thor Hyerdahl, famed marine explorer warned of pollution dangers, based on his transatlantic crossing with the straw boat Ra, when he encountered tar balls for forty-three out of the fifty-seven days he was at sea. Hyerdahl felt that the presence of this oil pollution indicated a rapidly deteriorating water quality in the oceans. However, in the 1970s considerable research into marine environments was completed as part of the International Decade of Ocean Exploration (IDOE). Much of the interest centered around the effects of the four to five million tons of oil that are spilled into our oceans annually.

ONCE THOUGHT STATIC. Prior to these studies of the 1970s, scientists believed that deep ocean water might remain unaffected and virtually unmoved for about a thousand years. It was also believed that surface and near surface pollution might stay in a given area for a long time because there was not much mixing between the surface and the deep water. Recent evidence that these beliefs are not correct has caused a re-examination of what we dump and how we dump it. For example, there are large powerful eddies in the sea that stir the surface water and encourage mixing of surface layers with those below the surface. There are also deep water currents that not only move along smartly, but also change direction frequently. Thus, it is understood that oil spills may be mixed and cycled to deep sediments where they can be acted upon by organisms that could change the oil and tar balls into less objectionable products. However, several decades ago scientists believed that the deep parts of the oceans were very good places to dump radioactive wastes, since the water there would be "stuck" for about a thousand years. Now one might take exception to referring a major pollution problem to our descendants in a thousand years, but in all fairness scientists believed that improved technology during the next thousand years would make it possible for us to clean up the problem at a later date. However, this new knowledge that the deep ocean water is in constant motion means that radioactive wastes are not as safe in the deep water as once believed. The Caribbean Sea, for example, is now thought to flush out in about one hundred years.

ABLE TO REJUVENATE! We have always insisted that the sea, and the entire biosphere for that matter, has the ability to cycle pollutants and to recover from industrial and civilized by-products. We have stated time and time again that over-population is the most important factor to be considered; that is, smaller numbers of humans will produce fewer wastes and the sea and land environments will have a better chance of successfully recycling these materials. If human populations continue to grow we will eventually reach a point where the amounts of wastes produced are so great that there will be very little hope these wastes can be recycled. We are approaching that point very quickly now. Don't hope that technology will save you either. Technology and science can help, but there are limits involved with their effectiveness. The bottom line is that although technology can help us fight our pollution problems we must help ourselves by limiting population size. Perhaps it's about time that we applied technology to the problem of controlling population size and solve lots of scientific and social problems at once!

WE DO HAVE A PROBLEM! The findings of the International Decade of Ocean Exploration is encouraging, but we must be careful not to read too much into it. We still have problems! However, there appears to be evidence now that the open sea can handle some measure of pollution. The coastal areas, on the other hand, still present many pollution problems. The closer we get to the land, the more dangerous oil spills and other pollution problems become. This is so because the bulk of the productivity of the oceans comes from estuaries and the bulk of the life exists in the estuaries. The aquatic portion of the estuary is not the only area that requires and deserves consideration. The area that borders the estuary is very important in the cycle of marine productivity. These borders are called salt marshes. Marsh grasses and marsh algae are very susceptible to oil spills and other pollutants. Thus an oil spill in the open sea may be a much less serious problem than in the estuary where the oil may choke sediments, toxify the shallow water column, smother small marine life, and disrupt the cycle of life. Along the beaches oil spills will kill water foul and destroy beds of mollusks and other types of invertebrate life. There are other problems as well and these are no less frightening—such as ocean toxic waste dumping practices and industrial effluents into rivers and streams that flow ultimately to the sea. There is also the aesthetic aspect. Oil spills look ugly and discourage tourism. They rob people of normal recreation, and they destroy recreational equipment. Last, but not least, taxpayers often pay for the cleanup and—it gets expensive.

THANKS TO A LOT OF PEOPLE! Another pollution item was brought to our attention by several people and several of these folks are familiar to you. Special thanks to Bob Rance of Save Our Stripers (S.O.S.) and George Wilde of MECLI, and Fred Schwab of the Citizens' Council on striped bass. It was noted this summer that high concentrations of chlorine were measured in the water of Great South Bay and in the ocean area close to Fire Island Inlet. We brought this to your attention in an earlier issue and at that time we pointed out that apparently the problems were related to one or more breaks in the sewage treatment pipeline that was so controversial during its construction—and probably still is! Nassau County officials insisted that repairs would be made in all due haste. We hope that's so. Anyway, that information pointed out that chlorine is becoming a major pollution problem. Now there is one good characteristic of chlorine; that is, it tends to escape from the water as a gas. That's why you must continuously add chlorine to swimming pools. However, if we add more chlorine than the sea can dissipate in a given area, then there will be a net buildup of the chemical in the water. Fish are particularly sensitive to chlorine because the chemical is an

oxidant that is very irritating to delicate tissues such as that of the gills and fins. In short, it makes the fish more susceptible to infection because delicate tissues are left open to attack by microorganisms.

NOW A PROBLEM IN CHESAPEAKE. In the last several decades, there has been considerable growth in some portions of the middle Atlantic States. Lower prices for land and houses than in the Metropolitan centers of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, and lower taxes attracted many people to settle in portions of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and in some of the more inland states whose runoffs still impact on the coastal delta area we call Chesapeake Bay. Now one of the effects of more housing and industry is more people, of course, and that means more wastes and this, in turn, means more chlorine added to drinking water and waste water in order to control the growth of bacteria. For example, in one Maryland county in 1979, 373 **TONS** of chlorine were used to treat sewage in thirty-six plants! What has brought about this sudden concern for chlorine levels in Chesapeake Bay? Actually, several factors and events have synergetically mitigated government officials to question the continued, widespread, and year-round use of chlorine as a disinfectant. One factor has been the reports from biologists that several important species of fish that return to the Chesapeake complex to spawn each spring have had increasingly less successful year classes. These species are the American shad and the striped bass. We all know that there has not been a really good year class of Chesapeake bass since early in the 1970s, but the 1980 index figure (number used for comparison of the size of successive spawns) which was 1.9 and the lowest in well over a decade, has fisheries biologists, recreational fishermen, naturalists, ecologists, and commercial fishermen concerned for the future of the species. In addition, the spring spawning run of shad was so small that biologists were easily able to estimate the size of the spawning population. Their estimate was **only** 4,239 fish! The shad and the striped bass are clearly in trouble. In 1970 the commercial shad catch was one million pounds, but in 1979 the catch was only 32,000 lbs. Much the same story holds true for stripers and that story has been documented thoroughly in the pages of this and other magazines.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? Maryland is calling for new laws and regulations that would impact on the water quality of the Chesapeake complex. One proposal calls for a complete ban on catching and selling shad. In another, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has called for a ban on the use of chlorine in spawning rivers. However, overharvest, chlorine, and PCBs are not

(Continued on page 26.)

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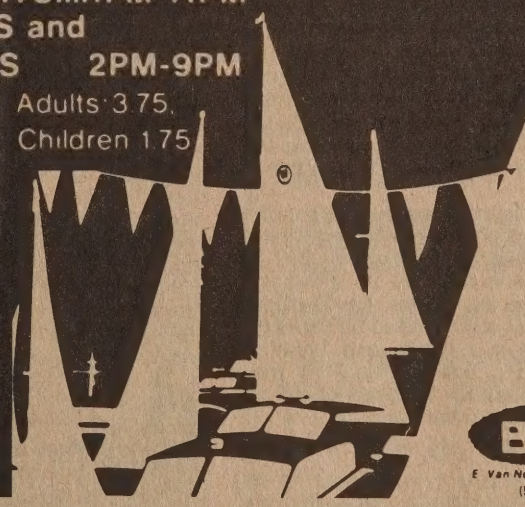
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SURF FISHING

BACK TO BASICS

by Nick Balamaci

The tip of the jetty was crowded on this gentle August evening. Five anglers were lined up, plugging a rip that grew stronger by the hour. Suddenly, a rod arched as one of the jockeys made fast to a decent fish. For the next hour this scene was repeated again and again by four of the five fishermen. Once the blitz was over, the fifth—noticeably despondent—was approached by one of the others in the dim moonlight. Struggling to keep his fish in tow up on his back, this elderly veteran said, "You've got to spool your plug out into the rip about twenty-five yards, kid, or you won't get no fish!" He was thanked profusely for this vital information, and the "kid" subsequently began to catch fish at this locale, on future visits.

Has this ever happened to you? It has to me, and I must here and now confess that I am the aforementioned "kid." And although it has taken a long time to sink in, I have come to the realization that **given a productive location**, if you are not catching fish, there often IS something you can do about it!

As there are probably thousands of subtle variations that can turn fish on or off to your bait or lure, I will not here pretend to know or attempt to cover them all; rather, I will discuss broad areas as well as some tricks that have worked for me, and hopefully you can put one or more of these basics to use on a night where you face an empty stringer.

LOCATION:

Most important to remember in this area is CHANGES. A uniform stretch of coastline could be barren; however, where all that sameness gets broken, there you'll find bass, sooner or later. Some things to look for in this regard:

Jetties - wood or rock structures built out into the water.

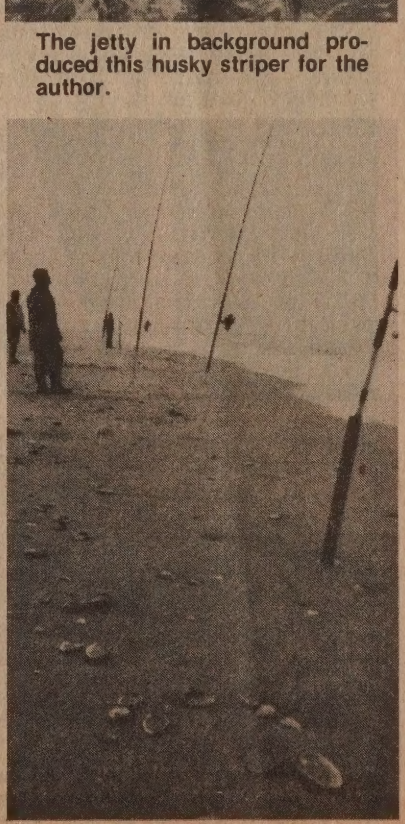
Rips - fast water, especially in relation to the water around it.

Cuts in bars - can find these two ways: look for the section of a wave that does not break on the bar where the rest of the wave does break. Also, check the beach for points where the wave action pushes water further up the beach than in other spots.

Holes, bars and sloughs - can be spotted by a difference in the color of the water.

Submerged rocks - find these when exposed at low tide, or sometimes the hard way: lose a lure on them.

The jetty in background produced this husky striper for the author.



Baitfishing often requires an extra dose of patience, but it does produce.

Coves - usually productive only when they contain bait. See next section.

Bait - find the bait, and the bass will not be far behind. At times, one can look into the water and see baitfish swimming at one's feet. However, more often than not they are less visible. Telltale signs vary, and include the following: an oil slick on the water creating a flatter surface than the surrounding area; a ripple or V-wake effect which seems inappropriate to existing wave action; small swirls, eddies, slaps, or splashes; and of course, during the daytime hours, a dark spot in the water that moves.

BAIT:

The key word here would seem to be "natural"; that is, your presentation of the bait should parallel as closely as possible the actual look and behavior of the prey as it occurs naturally. Check your bait periodically. Here is a suggested checklist when baitfishing:

Hooking. Hook a worm through the mouth and out again a half inch further down the body, then slide the worm up the shank to the eye of the (baitholder) hook. Short striking fish are handled by using either a tandem hook rig or a machine wrapped hook. Whole fish and eels are best hooked through both jaws: chunks are penetrated on the dorsal side, and fillets at the wider end. Soft shell crabs can be rubber-banded to the hook. With clams, go through the firmest section and use an elastic thread (sparingly) if necessary. Also, you can't go wrong with a bronzed hook, whereas a shiny finish can spook fish in some instances.

Leaders. Twenty-four to thirty-six inch clear leaders of forty pound test mono are sufficient for most uses except in the case of eels, where twelve to eighteen inch leaders serve to keep these frisky creatures in a smaller area, more accessible to the lazy cow bass that may happen to swim by.

Floats. Use just large enough a float to keep your bait off the bottom—roughly a half-inch in diameter for worms and one inch for other baits. Do not use floats with eels. Natural cork finish camouflages best when the water is clear; however, in a roiled surf, a bright orange or yellow float can help a bass zero in on your offering.

Rigs. The Fishfinder rig is usually preferred, as it allows a fish to take

the bait without immediately feeling resistance. With small bait, a standard surf rig will suffice. For lethargic spring fish, with worms or clams as bait, a pompano rig can be used, which consists of two end loops and two dropper loops in-between. End loops receive your main line and sinker, while the dropper loops each get a 3/0 hook.

Sand spikes. Three foot spikes are best in that they will keep your line above the pull of breaking waves. However, if there is a strong cross-wind, their height becomes a liability as your line will have too much of a belly in it. In this instance, use a short spike.

Rod, reel and line. Depends a lot on the locale. Generally, use a rod with a fast taper for soft baits such as worms and clams. A medium taper will do well with chunks and crabs, while a slow taper "broomstick"-type rod is just about all you can use with eels and whole baitfish. Fifteen to twenty pound test line is adequate for most situations.

Drag setting - fighting position when using conventional tackle (clicker on and free spool until you get a pick-up), and with spinning gear when using small baits. Otherwise, keep your drag backed off completely until a pick-up is felt. Feed the fish line, then at first pause tighten up a bit and set the hook.

Other. Carry an extra spool of line in a lighter pound test for use if more distance is needed. Stand in a position such that your rod tip is silhouetted against the lightest area of sky available. Finally, in my experience, Coleman-type lanterns tend to attract sand sharks and keep bass off the beach.

ARTIFICIALS:

Carry a variety! You must match the prevalent bait as well as possible. This means in size, shape, color, speed, depth, and action. Keep your drag in a fighting position.

Bucktails. Most important is that they must be on or very near the bottom. This, then, automatically tells you that you should make your own, otherwise the cost can get prohibitive if you lose a few lures each outing. Also, experiment with different weights as the strength of the current changes. Generally, the ideal weight is the one that will allow the bucktail to reach the bottom in a reasonable time, but which is also light enough to be pushed along by the tidal flow. Strike at any resistance.

Tins. Usually best to start the retrieve just as your tin hits the water, and keep it moving. However, there are times when these lures can be worked on the bottom, slow and steady or with twitches. Most used in the daytime, they do also work at night, in either painted or metal finishes. This calls for a slow retrieve. Use bucktail or feathers on the hook for added attraction.

Rigged or imitation eels. Retrieve can vary, but eels dwell on the bottom, so keep these lures down there. Start off slow and steady, but if no fish, change speed and style of retrieve.

Plugs. Whole volumes could be written on this subject alone. Some random shots follow:

1. Keep the retrieve painfully slow at night—just enough to give the lure some action. Speed it up during the day.

2. Action is a vital point. Some plugs are "duds"; i.e., they do not swim properly or at all. Experiment: there are always things you can do to change a lure's action. Bend the eyelet up and it will swim deeper. On a hollow-bodied plug, injecting a few cc's of water will bring it deeper in a rip and slow down its action, making it more realistic. Change a treble tail hook to a single Siwash for more wiggle. You can also use a rounded snap or loop-type knot (such as the Uni-knot) to give the lure more freedom of movement. Use slower-action plugs in a fast tide and vice versa.

3. Maintain control over your whole outfit, from reel to plug. The drag must be set tightly enough to set the hooks and yet not cause the line to part or (in the case of weakfish) rip the fish's jaw off. Keep your rod tip as close to the water as possible—it telegraphs better in that medium, even with a belly in it. Spinning tackle with mono line is okay for short-distance work, but if a spot calls for spooling your plug out a ways, use conventional tackle with a no-stretch line (Dacron or Micron). Hooks are NEVER sharp enough when they leave the factory. Use a mill file or a stone to get a razor point (test it by running the point across your fingernail: if it grabs, it's sharp enough).

4. Color is important. Usually you should use a lighter plug on the brighter nights, and vice versa. And turbid water is often best fished with a brightly colored lure. However, there are many exceptions; so again, carry a variety.

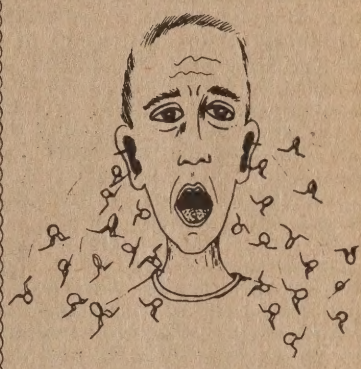
5. If you are missing hits, it is important to know what kind of fish you are dealing with: bass, blues or weaks. Fortunately or not, wooden lures tell the story, via the toothmarks (bluefish) or fang marks (weakfish) left behind. If no marks (or if uncertain), on the next retrieve, after the strike is felt, let the plug just sit where it is. It is probably a bass tail-slapping your lure, and in a few seconds it will have turned around to swallow the stunned prey. This is the time to set the hooks. Note that you can often get through weaks and blues (if you're after bass) by either painting the plug black (bass have better night vision) or else changing to a deep-diving plug to reach the stripers feeding underneath their lively competitors.

As mentioned earlier, this list is only the tip of the iceberg. There is far more knowledge to be had, but we'll never get to that unless our basics are in first.

Ronnie sez—

HELP!!!

I'VE GOT GUIDES COMING OUT OF MY EARS!!!



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THE HARD WAY

by Matt Ahern

Throughout a long and varied fishing career, I've met scores of fishermen who blithely enjoy their sport in a manner described by others as "doing it the hard way." I am well acquainted with this quirk, for I am not entirely immune. I can recall the many times over the years when I've fallen victim to asinine judgments of my own making. About this time I can hear you say: " Haven't we all?" Of course. I'm not about to tell you you should not have listened to that inner voice, for we are what we are and, therefore, heir to our personal frailities. Perhaps this is the only way we truly learn that all is not gold that glitters.

As I've said, I have been aware of these fishermen's quirks over the years, but the first time it truly came to my attention was one late summer day in 1930 when I was holding down my first job as a mate aboard the old Rose R II out of Canarsie. And because it was my first job, I fostered an enthusiasm toward it I could not hope to duplicate today. Nothing was too much. After all, you know, when you're sixteen years old...

On this particular day, Dick Persson, the skipper, had planned fishing a piece of mussel bottom situated north and east of Sandy Hook. The sea porgy fishing had been great there, as it always was each September. It seemed as the weeks passed, the larger the porgies became, so that by October two and three pounders were the common run. And just as suddenly when October arrived, the fish would disappear, to return the following September.

As the mate, it was my job to collect the pool along with the fare; the fare being two dollars and the pool, a quarter. This tab by today's standards seems ridiculous, I know. But during those Depression days, that fare, plus the pool, was often difficult to come by and it wasn't unusual for many fishermen to just pay their fare and not enter the pool. That quarter was important, and the inherent risk of losing it was often felt to be too great.

But at the same time, it wasn't unusual for kindly, more affluent fishermen to enter total strangers in the pool with no thought whatsoever of remuneration.

Well, anyway, as I say, it was my job to collect that fare and pool money. And also to answer the multitude of questions which only a mate encounters. "Where are we going?" "What are we fishing for?" "Am I rigged right?" "Hello, Marty. How'd you guys do yesterday?" And on and on; questions without end.

And this was one of those rare days when—surprise, surprise—every fisherman but one had entered the pool. The exception was a lady angler whose husband refused to put up the quarter, telling me it was his wife's first trip and that her chances were nil against the "pool sharks" on board. Oh, well. I'd heard it all before.

With the fare-collecting out of the way, I began the chore of opening and slicing skimmers into bait-sized pieces. I was almost finished when the skipper called me up to the pilot house. "A fog bank's rolling in from the south," he said. I looked, and sure enough—there it was: about three miles away, a brooding, flattened mass, sun-dappled on top, grey and foreboding at sea level. "I guess we'll forget those porgies," Dick said. "We'll try that fluke wreck. Tell the fellows to change their rigs and break out that salted squid."

Now is the best time to tell you about that fluke wreck. It lay offshore of Sea Bright in about fifty feet of water. I'd heard it was the crumbling remains of an Italian bark which had gone down during a violent northeaster many years before—about 1850, someone once told me. But proof of this was never established so far as I knew. Only a handful of party boat skippers knew of its existence, and as the passing years took their toll, these knowledgeable fishermen became fewer and fewer.

I'd fished it several times before, but only in fog-shrouded secrecy. This was deemed necessary to prevent anyone on board from taking shore ranges of its exact location—a feat up to then only accomplished by compass and running time. (No electronics those days.) All this hush-hush was worth the effort, for that wreck was a great place for outsized fluke during late summer and early fall.

Dick Persson was the type of skipper who always knew where he was no matter what the weather: fog, snowstorm, you name it, there was never need for concern. And I wasn't surprised when an hour or so later, I was told to prepare the anchor.

Within minutes of our arrival, fluke began to come up. Here, one; and there, another, a consistent pick throughout the morning. In-between gaffing the larger fluke, I managed to get a rig overboard and nail a few. Any fluke under four pounds was nonchalantly swung over the rail.

About Noontime, it happened. Amid shouts of "Gaff! Gaff!" coming from the bow, I heard shrieks of feminine alarm. It was my erstwhile lady angler struggling with a fluke so large it seemed determined—and capable—of pulling her overboard. She had handlined it to the surface and there it lay: the largest fluke I had ever seen. It looked like a brown, undulating carpet. Praying I wouldn't miss, I stuck the gaff in that monster's head and with the aid of the lady's husband, lifted it over the rail.

And there it lay—all nineteen-and-a-half pounds of it. The closest fluke to it that day was a mere nine or ten pounds. I doubt if that lady ever allowed her husband to forget the day

(Continued on page 31.)

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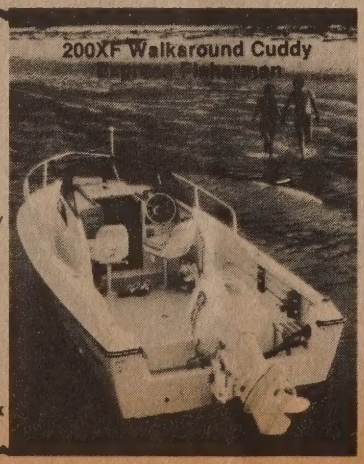


ROD OF THE WEEK:

DIAMOND JIGGING SPECIAL

by Pete Barrett

Diamond jigging continues to be one of the best fishing methods to catch large bluefish, all sizes of weakfish and striped bass from schoolies to bragging size cows.

To fish the jigs effectively, a rod with plenty of guts in the butt section is required. Bluefish can exert a surprising amount of strength when hauled up from deep water. No need for finesse here; this is a determined battle as fish try to literally hang on to the bottom. A limber rod with little backbone would be a poor fish-fighting tool for this type of fishing.

Many diamond jigging anglers like a rod with a stiff tip; while others prefer a more sensitive tip. If you are always using four to eight ounce jigs, then a less tippy rod would be best. Yet if you fish mostly diamonds of an ounce-and-a-half to four ounces, then a lighter tip would be fine.

Many weakfishermen like the more limber tip when working the small-sized diamond jigs in shallow water, feeling that the more delicate tip affords more sensitivity when the fish aren't slamming the lures, but taking them very gently. These rods can also be used to fish the banana type lures which were more popular several years ago and which still can score with a good catch of fish on some days.

Heavy bucktails worked in deep water over ridges, deep holes, tide rips and the edges of dropoffs will also perform well with this style rod.

Recommended Blanks: The lightest rods would be made from blanks like the Lamiglas MB-84-3M, Shakespeare 12-0625, Fenwick LB-966, Fisher 696, Dynaflex 6704 and Australian 966. The faster taper models can be cut from the tip section to firm up the action. These blanks run from seven to eight feet and can be cut from either end to shorten the overall length. Too much from the tip end will make a broomstick; so take only a small cut at a time until you get the right action.

A heavy action rod would be made from blanks like the Harrington 701, Fenwick 966, or 1086, Shakespeare 12-0425 and Dynaflex 3084, or 0705. Again, some of these blanks can be trimmed at the tip end to make them even stiffer.

Grips should be of a hard foam, cork or cork tape. Soft grips will fatigue your hands when you are into a big school of fish and will tire you out. You will not only be fighting the fish, but the soft grips which tend to cause your hands to squeeze the grips very hard.

Cork is getting very expensive, yet some anglers still favor it, especially with graphite blanks since cork transmits more vibrations than the foam grips. Because there are days when diamond jigging is so good that you can literally catch dozens of fish at a fast pace, some fishermen use cork tape double wrapped for thickness. The cork tape is the best non-slip surface so far used on any fishing rod. It does not, however, look as fancy as nicely trimmed foam or cork.

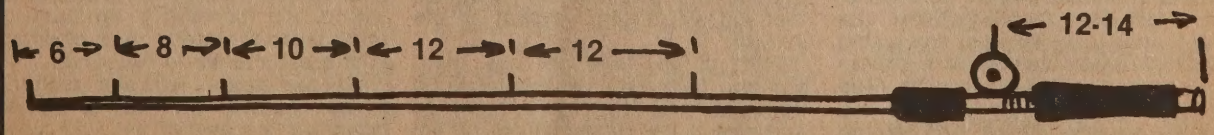
Reel seat. Cork tape rods can have the reel clamped directly to the blank, but other rods need a sturdy reel seat. Lightweight aluminum seats will eventually fail. It is best to use a heavy duty, chrome over brass seat for durability.

Guides are your choice, with many rod crafters preferring the ceramic guides. The only other choice would be a heavy duty hard chromed stainless guide. Carboloy guides are not required, nor are rollers.

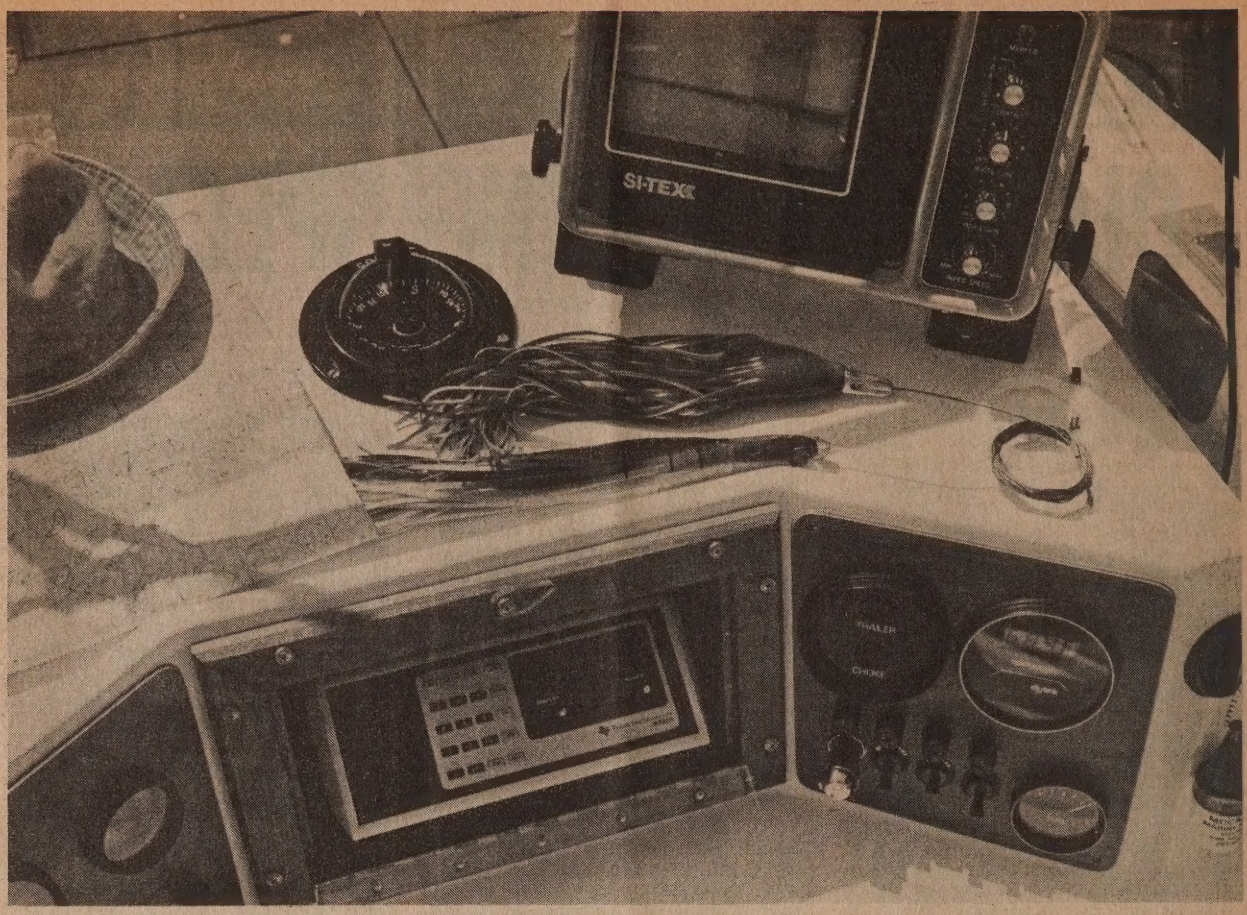
Tips. The most comfortable jigging rods have a handle long enough to fit under the angler's arm between the elbow and the armpit. Before installing the reel seat of grips, hold the rod tucked under your arm as if fishing and mark the spot where your hand naturally falls as it grips the rod. This is the exact spot for the reel seat.

Too short a handle makes a very uncomfortable rod, and too long a handle is unmanageable.

DIAMOND JIGGING ROD



GUIDE SPACING GIVEN IN INCHES, DISTANCE FROM BUTT CAP TO CENTER OF REEL SHOULD BE ADJUSTED FOR INDIVIDUAL ARM LENGTH.



NAVIGATION FOR THE SMALL CRAFT FISHERMAN

Part One — *by Jens Jacobs*

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind, that the success of a fisherman as a fisherman, to a large extent, depends on his skills and knowledge as a navigator. In other words, the chap who is an expert navigator has a better chance of finding that small bottom formation which holds promise of good fishing than his uninformed pal. What's more, the expert navigator will spend a lot less time searching for his favorite little fishing hole; will burn less fuel and spend more time fishing. And boating becomes a whole lot safer if you know your position at all times.

Okay. Then, for the sake of becoming a more successful fisherman and a safer boater, let's become expert navigators. No, I won't mislead you. If the subject is totally alien to you, you won't become an expert navigator by reading this series of articles. There is just so much that can be covered in a publication of this kind. I will, however, make an attempt to give you enough background to get started, and hopefully this will whet your appetite enough so that you will further yourself on the subject.

First of all, let's get one thing straight: before you can expect to be good at anything, you have to understand the fundamentals of the subject—and navigation is no exception. In other words, there is little use in building a road on swampy ground; it just won't hold up. So don't build your navigation skills on swampy ground by expecting that the purchase of a few black boxes will make you a proficient navigator.

Let's start at the bottom. Perhaps there is nothing more fundamental in navigation and informative to the fisherman than the nautical chart. The chart is, of course, a representation of the earth's surface scaled down to a convenient size and scale on which an incredible amount of information is stored, much of which is of great interest to fishermen.

As I said before, let's start with the basics. Assume your car is parked downtown somewhere and your good buddy is going to pick it up for you. How do you tell him where it is? Simple, you tell him at which intersection you left it. Let's say it was the S/W corner of 87th Street and Third Avenue. Since your buddy knows exactly how the city street

system is layed out, he knows exactly where it is, and how to get there. Now, let's assume you're a real sport and you'd like to clue your buddy in on your newly discovered fishing hole somewhere in the middle of Long Island Sound or off the Jersey Coast. How in the world are you going to make it clear to him where it is without the benefit of street signs and numbers? You give him the exact coordinates in latitude and longitude. What? Latitude and longitude—isn't that the antiquated system left over from the times of Columbus and the Dark Ages before the invention of Loran?

No, it's not a leftover from the days of wooden ships and iron men; it's the universal system of coordinates used on all charts by all chart-producing governments, and is the only system used to express position in all kinds of publications of interest to the mariner. In short, very fundamental and essential. If you accept the foregoing, I suggest you dig out chart #12363 which covers the western part of Long Island Sound; if not, you may as well forget the rest of these articles, since we will work with this system of coordinates from here on.

Well, then, let's get with it. Take a look at the left or right margin of the chart approximately in the center. See the number 41? And the line running from one side of the chart to the other in an east/west direction? That line is latitude 41 north. Now look either on the top or bottom of the chart, and approximately in the center you will find the line 73.30 west. Am I going too fast?

Let's look at the basics. As we all know, the earth is a sphere (or nearly so) and for the purpose of locating any place on earth, we cover the surface of the globe with a grid system called Latitude and Longitude; from now on Lat. and Long. First, let's look at Lat. As you should know, the globe is divided into two hemispheres—north and south, with the dividing line the Equator, which is Lat. 0.

From the equator (Lat. 0), the Northern and Southern Hemispheres are divided into 90°, which are the north and south geographical poles. So far, so good. Now we know that the Equator is Lat. 0 and the North Pole is Lat. 90 north and that Lat. 41 runs through Long Island Sound. If we would continue to follow it around the globe, we'd find that Madrid, Spain is also on Lat. 41 N. and so is Naples, Italy and Aomori, Japan.

To further define the system, each degree is divided into sixty parts called minutes. Each minute is further subdivided in sixty—called seconds, which again may be divided in 1/000 for super precise position expression. For the most part, however, in practical navigation, positions are expressed in 1/10 of a minute. Again, look at the right side of the chart and you will find that the BW bell buoy of Old Field Point on Lat. 40.59 north. (Remember, minutes never go beyond 60.) Also along the right margin, you will find that the black can C"3" north of Stratford Shoal is on 41.04'.6 north. Remember when I said that we also can express position in seconds? Instead of writing 41.04'.6 N., we could also write 41.04'36". What was done is nothing more than multiplying 6 minutes by 60. (Remember, 60 seconds to one minute?) Yes, more or less just like our time system.

How do we find the Lat. of that 18' rocky shoal just east of Eaton's Neck? Place one leg of a pair of dividers on the line 40.50' directly under the shoal, and the other leg exactly on the shoal. Without changing the divider spread, go either to the left or right chart margin and place one leg on 40.50' and read 40.57'.2 under the other leg, or 40.57'12", if the position is to be expressed in degrees, minutes and seconds. By the way, one minute of Lat. is equal to one nautical mile, which is the standard measurement for distance which is equal to 6076.1155 ft. (approx.) or 1852 meters. Therefore, 1/10 mile would be 607.6 ft., one second equals 101.27 ft., and if we go to 1/100 of a second, we have a position to an accuracy of a little over one foot or 30.9 centimeters. Pretty accurate, no?

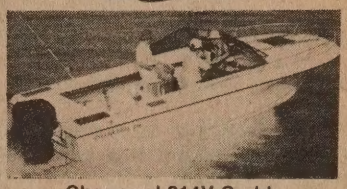
Now for Longitude, which is divided exactly the same as Lat. starting with 0, which is the Long. passing through the Greenwich Observatory in England. From 0, Long. extends to east and west to Long. 180° which, with some modifications, zigs and zags through the Pacific Ocean from North to South Pole to form the International Date Line. In short, everything west of Greenwich (that's us) is labeled west or simply W. Contrary to Lat., Long. is never used to measure distance. Okay, a quick review is in order. Latitude can be labeled N. or S., and increases from 0 to 90 subdivided into degrees and minutes.

Longitude is labeled E or W., from 0 to 180° with the same subdivisions. In our region, Lat. increases from the bottom of the chart to the top, and Long. from right to left. Now then, if I would reveal to you that there is an outstanding spot for blackfish in 41.01'.7 N. 73.27'.2W, you should have absolutely no trouble locating it. Nor should you have any trouble finding 54.40'.7 N. 8.26'.5 E., which was one of my favorite flounder spots as a kid. I am aware that you may not be the least bit interested where I fished for flounder as a kid; but just stick around. I may throw you a hint here and there as we go along.

All right, one more time. The Lat. and Long. coordinate system allows you to give and receive position to a high degree of accuracy. It's universal, easy to understand and work with, plus a great deal of information of interest to the fisherman is available only in the Lat. and Long. coordinates. So, get with it. More to come next week.

Boat Show

AMF Robalo



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PLUG MAKING HOW TO:

A PAIR OF SWIMMERS

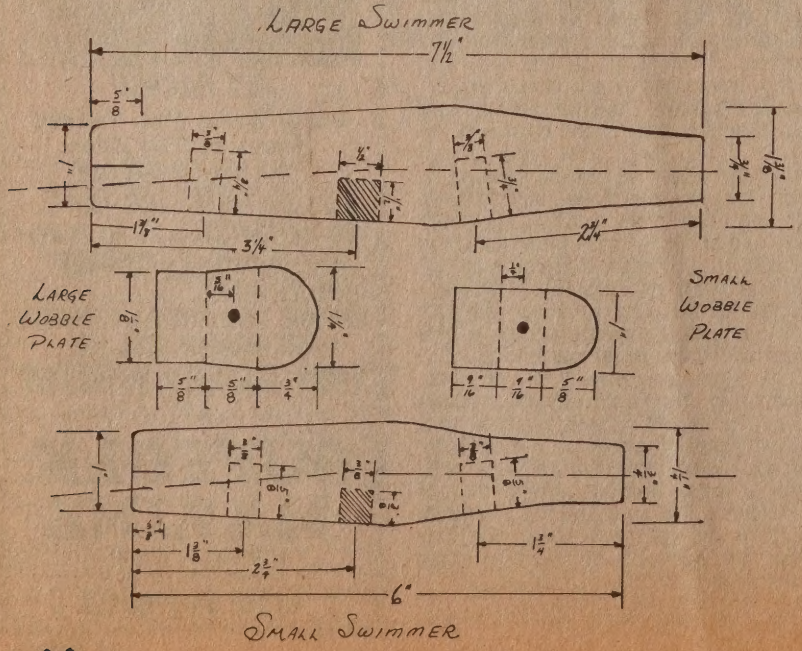
by John Schauer

This article will show you how to make two sizes of swimming plugs; both are surface swimmers. The large swimmer weighs 3½ oz. and the small one 2½ oz.

The first thing to do is to get some sugar or clear pine; this is the only wood to use. Since the diameter of the large plug is 1-3/8", try to get the wood in this thickness. The small plug is 1-1/4" in diameter, so it will take just a few seconds to get the 1-3/8" stock down to 1¼". Since the same sequence is used to make both the large and small plug, I'll just go through the sequence once. Naturally the only thing that will change will be the measurements, which can be found on the drawings included in the article.

When you are ready to shape the plug, the first thing to do is to find the centers, front and rear. Cut the wood into pieces 1-3/8" wide by 1-3/8" high by 7-1/2" long for the large plug, and 1-1/4" wide by 1-1/4" high by six inches long for the small plug. After the pieces are cut, draw a line from each corner, forming an X, do this front and rear, the center of the X is the center of the lure. **Do not** drill the through hole at this point.

Shape the plug, either by whittling it, or by turning it down on a lathe, try to keep from rubbing off the Xs on the front and rear, because the front X will become important for mounting the wobble plate. After the plug is shaped, get a hacksaw or band saw and using one of the lines on the front X, saw straight into the face 5/8 of an inch deep for the large plug and 3/8 of an inch for the small plug. This slot is when the wobble plate slides into the lure. The next step is to sight along the bottom of the lure and draw a line along the bottom as accurately as possible. The hook holes and balancing weight hole will be drilled along this line. You're now ready to drill the front hook hole. From the face of the lure measure back 1-3/8"; this will give you the center point of the hole. This measurement is used for both size lures. Drill the holes using a 3/8" drill bit. Drill the hole three-quarters of an inch deep for the large plug and five-eighths of an inch for the small plug. Next, drill the rear hook hole. On the large plug, measure 2-7/8 of an inch forward from the rear of the plug. This measurement will give you the center point for the rear hook hole. On the small lure measure 1-3/4" to the center point. Again, using a 3/8" drill bit, drill a hole three-quarters of an inch deep for the large plug and five-eighths of an inch for the small plug. Now, we are ready to drill the balancing weight hole. On the large plug measure back from the face 3-1/4", this will give you the center point for the balance hole. Using a half inch drill bit, drill a hole half an inch deep. On the small lure measure 2-3/4 of an inch back from the face for the center point. Using a 3/8 inch drill bit, drill a hole 3/8 of an inch deep.

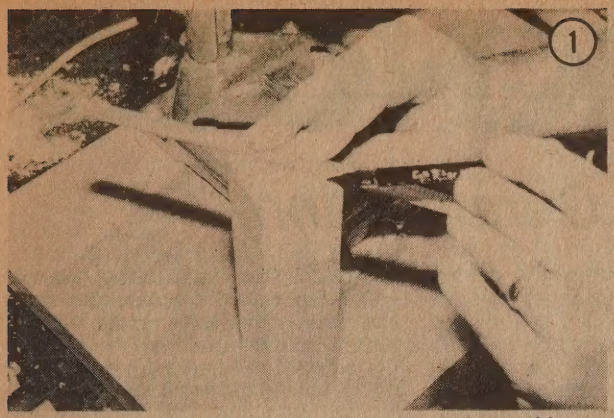


Once all the holes are drilled, the wobble plate should be cut. The measurements for both plates are shown in the Plug drawings. Use stainless steel .022 of .025m thick; this gauge steel is easy to cut with a pair of metal shears. Cut the lip out as per measurements. The most important step is to drill the hole in the lip accurately using a 1/8 inch drill bit. If you can get your hands on a carbide-tipped bit, all the better; it will last a lot longer. Drill the hole before the plate is bent, it's a lot easier. Bend the lip where the dotted lines are shown in the diagram. You will probably have to adjust the bend when the plug is finished to get it to swim right so don't go nuts trying to get it bent right before it is finished.

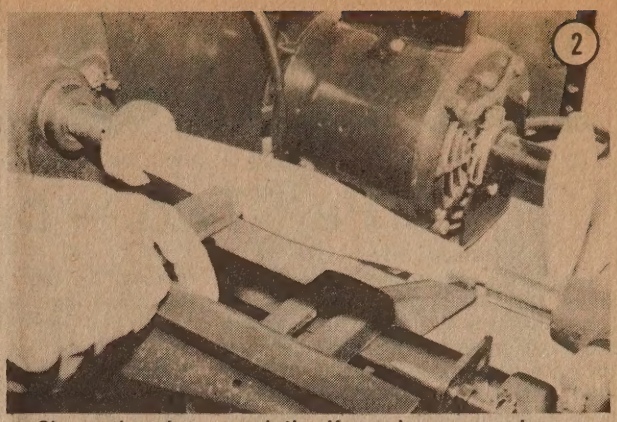
You are now ready to drill the through hole. Mount the lip in the slot you cut in the face of the lure. It is best if you use some epoxy (Devcon 5 Minute is good stuff) or pliobond glue to hold the lip in place. I use a 1/8 inch aircraft drill bit, 12 inches long to drill the through hole. When you are ready to drill the through hole start at the face drilling through the hole in the wobble plate, drill about halfway through the lure, then turn the lure around and drill in from the rear. Hopefully, the two will meet in the center somewhere. It will take time to get this part down pat, but once you do it will be a piece of cake.

Now, get some 1/16 inch thick stainless wire or welding rod. This can be bought at your local welding supply house; it is sold by the pound. To shape the wire, wrap one end around a 1/4 inch screwdriver blade, leave about 1 inch on the short end. Insert the through wire into the wobble plate. As it passes the hook holes, insert 2/0 swivels into the holes and onto the wire. Push the wire all the way through the lure and cut off, leaving about 3 inches sticking out of the rear. Bend an eye at the rear of the plug using the 1/4 inch screwdriver blade.

All that is now left to do on the body is the balance weight. You could pour the lead directly into the plug or you can make lead slugs. I like the lead slug method because the weights are

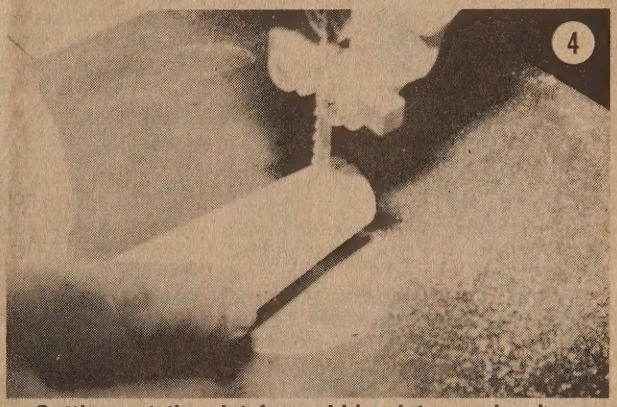


Find your centers with a straight edge and a marking pen.

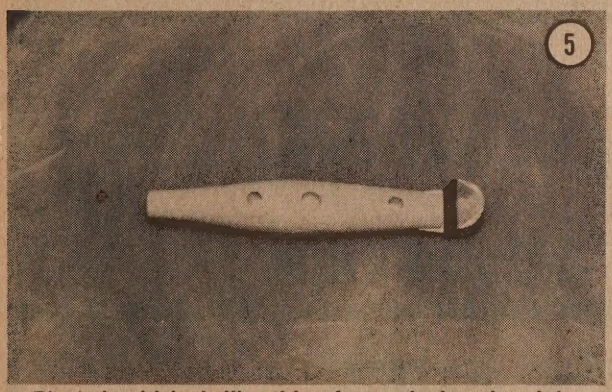


Shape the plug on a lathe if you have one at your disposal. If not, the body can be whittled.

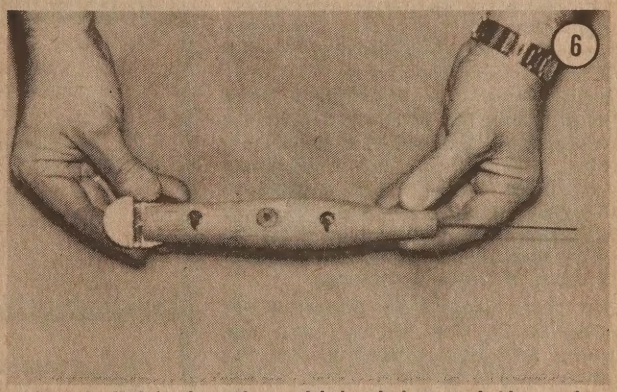
This is how body looks after coming off of lathe. Saw off excess at head of plug.



Cutting out the slot for wobble plate can be done with a band or hack saw.



Plug should look like this after swivel and weight holes are drilled.



Nearly finished product with lead slug, swivels, and through wire in place.

more consistent, and it is possible the balance hole might have been drilled into when the through hole was being drilled. If you pour the lead directly, it would run into the through hole and mess up the balance of the plug. To make accurate lead slugs you first have to make a mold. The mold I use was made out of two pieces of half-inch thick by two inches wide aluminum bar stock. I cut two lengths, three inches long, put them in a vise side by side and drilled a half-inch hole one-half inch deep right on the seam between the two pieces. You can also drill the 3/8 inch hole for the small plug at the same time. Leave room for more holes for other plugs. If the holes are drilled exact, the lead slug will fall out very easily when the mold is split. When you pour the lead, make sure you fill the mold to the top. The finished slugs should fit into the balance hole perfectly. If the slug fit is a little too tight, just tap it home with a hammer. If it is too loose, put some epoxy or pliobond in the hole first. After the slug is in the plug, you can file off any excess that sticks out past the edge of the hole.

The lure should be dipped into some boiled linseed oil for not more than forty-five seconds. The linseed oil seals the lure so it doesn't swell up and crack. It also prevents it from soaking up too much water which changes the swimming motion. Don't leave it soak longer than forty-five seconds; if it is left longer the finish coat might not stick. After this is done, let dry at least 24 hours. After the lure is completely dry, paint it with a good epoxy or enamel paint. The color is your choice: white or yellow; white and blue are also good.

As far as hooks are concerned, I hang 4/0 triple strength mustads on the large lure and 2/0s on the small one. You can also use a single short shank O'Shaughnessy size 7/0 on the tail instead of the treble. Always tie some bucktail on the rear hook; just don't put too much on.

Both these lures are good producers fished nice and slow. I can just see a 40 lb. bass sliding up behind the plug and smashing it. There is no greater thrill than catching a large fish on a plug that was homemade.

BASIC KNOTS

Part Two — *by Gerald Hahn*

Last week we covered three basic knots: the Clinch Knot, the Dropper Loop, and the End Loop. These are the most important to learn because they are used most frequently in the field. We also examined some variations of these knots, as well as basic rig connections. This week we will cover several other knots: the Blood Knot, the Snell, the Palomar Knot, and the Nail Loop.

Blood Knot (Diagram 1). This knot is used primarily for adding line to your reel and for adding a heavy shocker for a lure or rig. If you lost a considerable amount of fishing line from your reel, new line can be added by tying it with a blood knot. The knot is fairly small and the line will pass easily through the guides; it is also very strong.

Overlap the old line from your reel and the new line about eight inches. Take line A (from your reel) and twist it around line B five times, holding onto the bitter end. Now, take line B and wrap it around line A five times, once again holding onto the bitter end. Take the two ends and insert them through the central loop between the ten wraps, passing one end DOWN through the loop and the other end UP through the loop. While holding onto the bitter ends and the wraps, push the wraps toward each other, and pull the two lines apart until the knot is tightened. Make sure the wraps are snug and even—it takes some practice. Trim the excess off the bitter ends and put a cigarette to each of them, to prevent slipping.

Stu Apte Improved Blood Knot (diagram 2). The regular blood knot works well with lines that are the same weight or fairly close. When using two drastically different weights however, such as 15 lb. test monofilament and 50 lb. test leader for a shocker, then an improved blood knot, also called a Stu Apte knot in honor of its creator, is used. Here, the lighter line is first doubled by folding it back on itself, for extra bulk. Then the doubled mono is wrapped around the heavy leader five times, as before. The heavy leader, however, is wrapped only three times around the doubled line. The knot is then tightened and finished off, as already described.

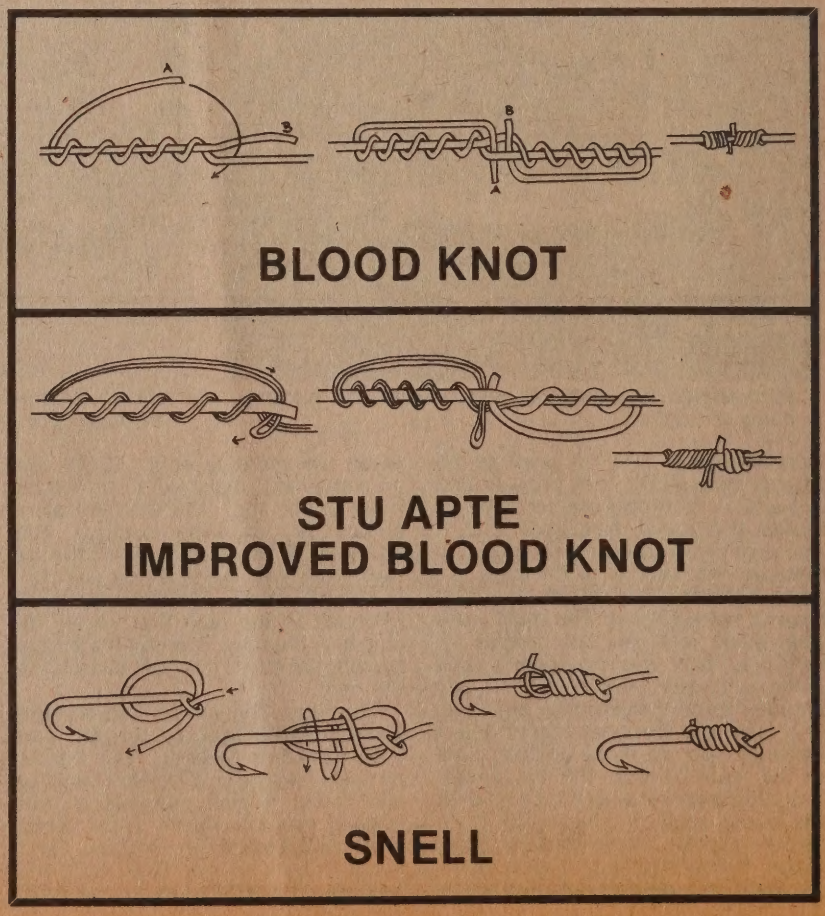
Blood knots have other uses, as well. For example, when I go bluefishing I add about ninety feet of 40 lb. test pink monofilament to the line on my reel, which may be the same weight but a different color. When I jig lures in 100' depths, I do not have to watch the line go out every minute. As soon as the line passes the blood knot and changes color, I know that the lure is close to the bottom, and I get ready to work it. A blood knot can actually be used to form a dropper, by overlapping the leader end to the desired length and tying the knot, as before. Then the hook or lure is connected to the leader. However, this is a bit complicated, and the beginner is advised to use standard droppers until he knows them well.

Snell (Diagram 3). The snelled knot is used specifically for tying a hook to a leader. The advantage of this knot is that the hook remains in line with the leader. Most pre-tied hooks—six packs—are tied with snells.

Pass the leader through the eye of the hook, from the top of the hook toward the point. Then pass it around the hook shank and through the eye once again, forming a loop. Twist the bitter end around the loop five times, working from the eye toward the point. Insert the bitter end through the loop, and pull the line back slowly to tighten. Trim the excess of the end and make sure the wraps are snug and even. This knot works for all turned in and turned out hook eyes. For straight eye hooks (ringed eyes), tie the knot in the same manner, but do not pass the line through the eye—just press the loop against the shank before making the wraps. The eye acts as a brace and stops the knot from sliding.

Quick Snell (Diagram 4). A quick snell is used when the line is too thick to pass more than once through a small hook eye. Pass the line through the eye toward the point, as before, and wrap the line directly around the shank five times, from the eye to the point. Then bring the bitter end back toward the eye and pass it through the first loop. A stronger variation is to pass the line through the eye once; then form the same loop as in a regular snell; that is, without bringing the line through the eye a second time. Complete the knot as per a regular snell.

Snells are useful for tying your own



hooks, something to do during those long winter months. Save money and buy the hooks and leaders in bulk. Most leaders come in three foot lengths, although some stores carry four foot leaders. General weights are as follows:

Flounder/porgy/snapper hooks: 20 to 30 lb. test leader - 12'' snells.

Fluke/weakfish: 30 lb. test leader - 3' to 4' snells.

Sea bass/tautog: 30 to 40 lb. test leader - 12'' snells.

Bluefish/striped bass/cod: 40 to 50 lb. test leader - snells vary from 12'' to 2', depending on fishing conditions.

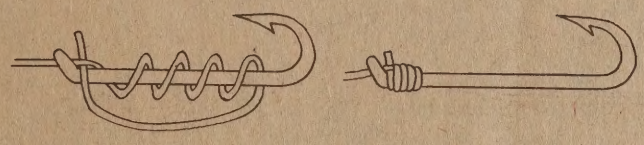
Palomar Knot (Diagram 5). This knot can also be used for tying hooks and lures to leaders or monofilament. Some research labs claim that the Palomar Knot is stronger than a clinch knot or snell; others say the line twists more with this knot. It is easy to tie both with light and heavy lines.

Form a loop that is slightly larger than the hook or lure, and pass it through the eye. Tie a single overhand knot with the loop, but do not tighten it. Now take the end of the loop and pass it around the bottom of the hook or lure. Pull the loop tight until a knot is formed, and trim the excess off the bitter end. As long as the loop is larger than the object, the Palomar Knot can be used to tie even large lures to monofilament or leader material. When two knots are involved, however, as when tying a barrel swivel to the main line and leader, clinch knots are easier to work with than Palomar Knots, because of the loop problem.

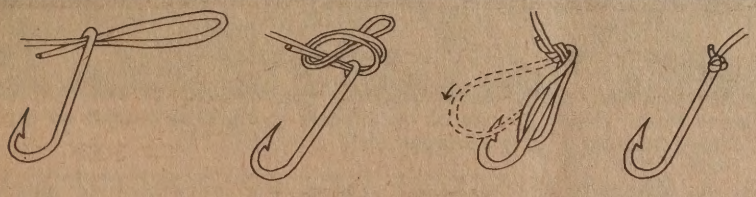
Nail Loop (Diagram 6). The nail loop, our last, is used to connect a lure to a leader, when free-swinging action is desired. The nail loop is stronger than an end loop and is not as bulky as an improved end loop. As stated, other knots (clinch knots, Palomar knot) can be used to tie a lure, but in some cases, they may inhibit the lure's action.

Put the leader through the eye of the lure and turn it back on itself. Using a nail (or other similar object), wrap the leader around itself three times, working toward the lure. Pass the bitter end through the center of the wraps and remove the nail. Hold onto the loop near the lure, and pull the bitter end with a pair of pliers, to tighten the knot. The loop knot works well with heavy monofilaments or leaders.

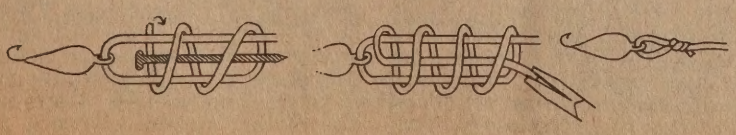
Once you learn how to tie these basic knots and the ones covered in Part I, you should be able to cope with most fishing situations. Of course, there are many other knots, but most of them are for special purposes: fly fishing, for example, or wire, or very heavy lines for big game fish. Practice the basic knots until you know them by heart, especially the ones you need in the field. No matter whether you will be fishing alone or with others, you will save time and money, once you know the basics.



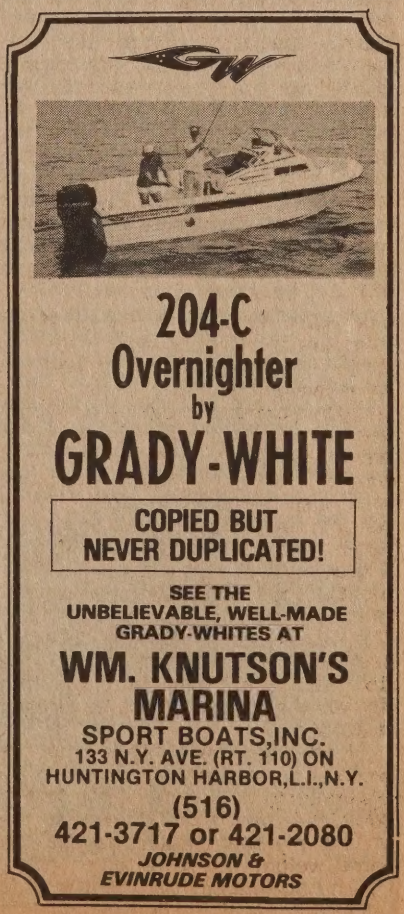
QUICK SNELL



PALOMAR KNOT



NAIL LOOP KNOT



EXOTIC FISHING: STATESIDE

by Al Ristori

If your mouth waters when you read about exotic fishing, but your pocketbook precludes a foreign trip—then your problem may be solved by making an exotic fishing trip without ever leaving American waters. The Dry Tortugas are about as exotic as you can get within the U.S. This last, relatively virgin reef area within our waters is located about sixty miles west of Key West. The tiny island upon which Fort Jefferson sits is the last American outpost before you get to Cuba. Yet it's now a relatively simple matter to fish this area at a very reasonable cost on a party boat that many of our readers will be quite familiar with.

The 140' "Viking Starship" leaves Montauk in November, and spends the winter making long range trips to the Dry Tortugas from Key West. It's a long way from here to there, and you can bunk aboard in-between trips. While there, you won't lack for Yankee companionship. Last March I found myself fishing alongside three Sheepshead Bay pros: Sonny Rosen, Charley Petrone, and Bobby Karen. This was their first time fishing for tropical species, but they did very well—and kept me busy identifying species for them. They even made the most of their Key West trip by chartering Captain John Hunter the next day and catching a sailfish.

The forty-hour overnight trip is a real fishing marathon. The "Starship" leaves Oceanside Marina, on Stock Island, at 11PM and only takes four hours to reach the grounds. It's still pitch dark when you start fishing, but the period right around dawn is often the most productive of the entire day. Once you start, the fishing never stops. Anglers come and go from their pre-selected spots at the rail, but the captains are always working to keep the boat in good fishing. Even during the middle of the night, moves are made on a regular basis. Few, indeed, are the anglers who can fish this entire period. Most fish as hard as they can all day and into the night, before getting some rest in anticipation of the dawn "bite" on the second day.

Though the reef fishing in the Tortugas is generally excellent by any standard, there are some very picky trips. Just as with fish anywhere, the Tortugas groupers and snappers turn on and off. The weather can also be a big factor in the fishing. Very strong tides almost invariably put a big dent in the catch, and windy weather doesn't help either. Most of this party boat fishing is done at anchor, but drifting can provide bonanza catches when the wind and tide conditions make it possible.

Sonny Rosen shows off one of the monster porgies he caught on the "Viking Starship's" Dry Tortugas trip.

The fabled "Ristori Jinx" usually works pretty well when I climb aboard a party boat, so I haven't hit the right conditions on either of the trips I made during the last couple of years. The first trip coincided with a partial eclipse of the sun, and the tides were roaring all the time. I actually hit pretty good weather on last year's trip, but the water was discolored from a week of strong winds. That really hurt the fishing the first day, though it got pretty good after that. Indeed, both of my trips have been "bailed out" by the fishing on the latter portion of the excursion—illustrating the importance of all that fishing time.

That first trip turned out to be a big success, as I nailed a forty pound black grouper at dusk and won the pool. Last year I watched everyone around do well, while I couldn't do anything right. Nevertheless, I ended up with a good stringer of beautiful and tasty fish. My total catch included thirteen species. While yellowtail snappers predominated, there were also red and mutton snappers, plus red and scamp groupers, red hind (strawberry groupers), a porgy, a bluefish, and a grunt. Less desirable catches included squirrelfish, moray eels, big blue runners, and a sand

tilefish. Other species I noted around the boat included the following: amberjack, kingfish, barracuda, bonito, black and Kitty Mitchell groupers, mangrove and hog snappers, margate, and a very ugly scorpionfish. In addition, the crew bested a tiger shark in the 200 lb. class, and a dolphin was lost.

One species that usually shows up, but didn't on that last trip, is the jewfish. The crew fishes a large live bait on a special rig attached to the rail near the bow. Every so often the 16/0 Penn Senator starts singing, and there's a flurry of activity. Not all the hits are hooked, but the fish that get involved with these baits are usually quite large. The jewfish seem to bite best at night, and on my first trip one just short of 300 lbs. was wrestled aboard. A total of twelve were taken two years ago, but the crew had already boated eleven by the first week in March last year. The tiger shark provided the greatest excitement on the crew's rig during the last trip, but they also caught an exceptionally large 63 lb. black grouper and some big amberjack.

While many anglers are content to fish for the often abundant yellowtails, the "sharpies" rig up bigger baits and wait out the black groupers. Almost invariably, some blacks are boated, but the success ratio on that species varies greatly from trip to trip. Even blacks of modest size are expert at diving into the rough bottom before the angler can move them. Captain Paul Forsberg told me of one spot where the hang-ups are so bad that he's reluctant to even get involved. There are lots of blacks, but even expert fishermen rarely succeed in getting them out of their lairs. On the other hand, there are days when everything seems to go right. One Tuesday twenty-hour trip last year produced forty-five blacks! On the trip I made last year, a casual angler took the pool with a black that wasn't much smaller than the sixty-three pounder taken on the crew's rig—and he boated that huge fish on a yellowtail hook!

Anglers leave the "Viking Starship" after a Dry Tortugas trip that produced the big amberjack and black groupers hanging up, as well as loads of other smaller species.

Mutton snappers are very abundant in the Dry Tortugas, and are probably the most desired eating fish. Most of those caught seem to run in the six to twelve pound class, but many larger specimens are brought aboard. These beautiful scrappers can fight as hard as a big grouper, but don't have the same tendency to seek out snags in the bottom. The porgies taken in these waters are usually giant-sized, averaging three to six pounds in weight. The same applies to the margate, a giant grunt that sometimes exceeds ten pounds. Scamp and red groupers are abundant, as are the closely related red hind—usually referred to as strawberry groupers.

Something new last year was the experimentation with deep water fishing. Most of the waters worked by the "Viking Starship" are sixty to eighty feet in depth and on the edge of dropoffs. However, when tides are light, it's possible to anchor up on fairly open bottom in 260'. In December, 1979, Captain Forsberg was able to find a deep water spot not far from Fort Jefferson that produced good catches of the true red snapper with consistency. Though most of the reds are average sized fish in the five to ten pound class, some up to seventeen pounds have been boated. In order to get away from the discolored shallower waters on my trip last March, Captain Forsberg moved over to that spot in the late afternoon. The tide wasn't too bad, and a decent pick of red snappers developed, along with some Kitty Mitchell groupers and a big amber-

(Continued on next page.)

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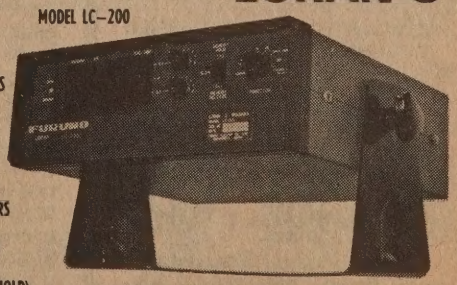

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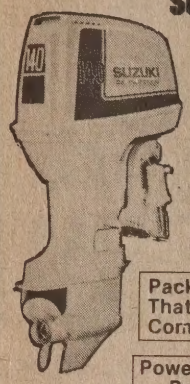
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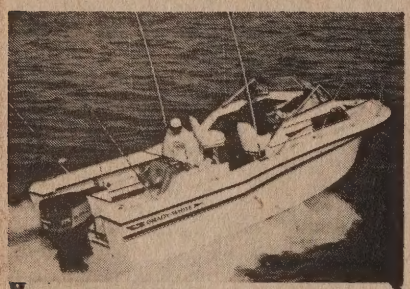
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jack. Paul hasn't done enough fishing in that area yet to determine just what the potential is, but he might well end up with a very special attraction if consistent red snapper action can be found.

There's also good potential for anyone wishing to fish the surface with live bait. In the course of bottom fishing for the delicious snappers and groupers, some surface species (such as kingfish and barracuda) are caught. However, a great many of these and other tropical game fish could be hooked if anyone took the time to wait them out. As it is, sailfish, dolphin and African pompano have been taken by accident from time to time.

Most fishermen aboard the "Viking Starship" rig up with the standard Florida bottom fishing rig. This consists of a round sinker (with a hole through the middle) which is slipped on the line, before a leadered hook is added. The hook is tied on heavy mono, with a swivel at the opposite end—both to negate the twisting effect of the bait in the current, and to prevent the egg sinker from riding down to the hook. This rig is popular because it doesn't tend to get fouled in the bottom as readily as some others. However, the crew has found that the old reliable hi-lo rig used up north for porgies and sea bass will work just as well for yellowtails and other small species—if not better. This rig consists of a bank sinker at the end of the line, with leadered hooks looped into dropper loops the length of a leader above the sinker—and another leader length above that.

Half-balao baits are favored for muttons and blacks, and some fish are saved by preparing a double hook rig (with just a few inches of mono in-between) for these larger baits. Smaller hooks and baits will put many more yellowtails in the bag, even the big "flags" that are fairly common in this area. Considering the number of flag yellowtail taken in the Dry Tortugas with dead bait right on the bottom, I wonder how good the fishing would be if live pilchards were employed?

As in party boat fishing everywhere, stern spots are the most desired. They're particularly valuable when the tide is running hard, as you have the opportunity to cast your line astern and avoid the mass of other lines all headed for the stern. Unfortunately, the number of stern spots is limited—and they're often reserved well in advance. The next best thing is to get a spot near the bow. From there you can cast underhanded and get away from the crowd—or use a heavy sinker to prevent drifting into the knot of lines at the stern. Under normal conditions, the entire boat produces as the crew drops chum bags down on downriggers along the sides and at the bow.

Don't expect much in the way of scenery on these trips. Except for a distant glimpse of Fort Jefferson (the last American land before Cuba), there's nothing to see but blue waters until you return to Key West. At the dock there'll be fish trucks waiting to buy the excess catch of those who wish to sell. Good prices are paid for the snappers and groups, but it will cost you a lot more to buy anything else that will taste as good on the table. The fish are in first class condition, as they are all kept on saltwater ice in the Starship's large fish holds.

An overnight trip to the Dry Tortugas is something that everyone should experience. The "Viking Starship" charges $130 for the forty-hour excursion and $75 for the Wednesday twenty-hour trip. Children under 13 go for half fare. A Monday night twenty-hour family special provides fares of $50 for ladies and $35 for children. In view of the rapidly escalating cost of fuel, these are bargain prices—especially when you consider that it's possible to retrieve some (or all) of the cost when you return to the dock.

All tackle is provided, though expert anglers bring their own rods and reels. Heavy duty boat rods and conventional reels are favored, with mono testing at least forty pounds. I like to carry a lighter rig specifically for yellowtails. Joe Alexander's well stocked galley will take care of all your eating and drinking requirements. Joe's ham and egg sandwiches are the best around, and his cheeseburgers can't be beat in Key West at twice the price. A special dinner is prepared for overnight trips. There's always the very freshest of fish, plus something like lasagna—along with salad and all the trimmings. After a full day at the rail, and a night of fishing to come, that hot meal is a real treat!

There's little chance that your trip will be ruined by bad weather. The beamy "Starship" can fish in almost any kind of weather and didn't miss a trip in the first two years of Dry Tortugas operations. It blew twenty knots or better just about all the time during my first trip, but I found it quite comfortable to both fish and rest. Though rain is unusual during the winter, there's always the possibility of a squall, so it's wise to bring a set of light rain gear. That, or a light jacket, might come in handy at night or around dawn. I find it too warm in Florida for the knee boots I like to wear up here, but it's a good idea to bring an extra pair of sneakers or boat shoes in case those you're wearing get wet.

Give the Dry Tortugas a try this year. Even if you don't catch anything outstanding, you'll enjoy the variety fishing and will end up with a stringer of colorful fish that will make the trip well worthwhile. Best of all, you'll have made a trip to an exotic location without ever leaving the United States! Reservations are a must. Write to Viking Starship, P.O. Box 2361, Key West, FL 33040, or call (305) 294-2310.

FISH & MARINE NEWS

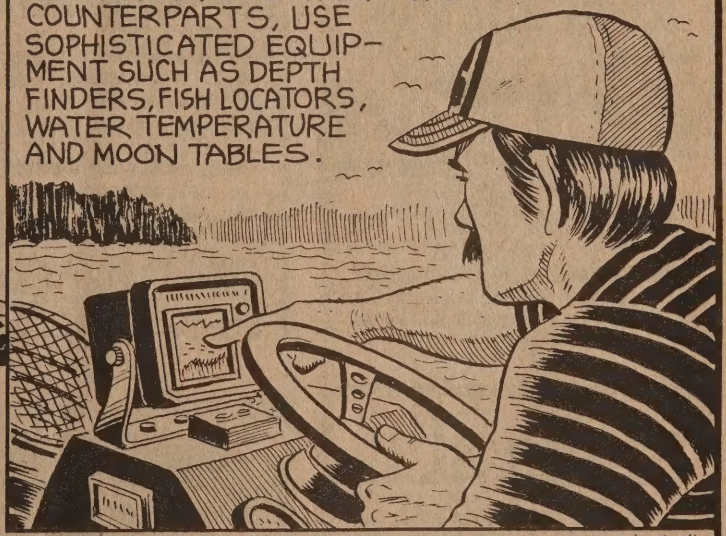
BY FRED GUARDINEER

THREE ENDANGERED FISH FIGHT DAM... *THE COLORADO SQUAWFISH, HUMPBACK SUCKER AND BONYTAIL CHUB* - ALL RESIDENTS OF THE MUDDY WHITE RIVER OF UTAH, ARE CONSIDERED ENDANGERED ENOUGH TO DELAY CONSTRUCTION OF THE WHITE RIVER DAM, NECESSARY FOR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT. A RECENT PRECEDENT WAS THE MUCH PUBLICIZED *SNAIL DARTER PERCH VS. THE TENNESSEE TELLICO DAM.*

THE AMER. LITTORAL SOCIETY, *HIGHLANDS, N.J. 07732 (201-291-0055)* WILL HOLD ITS *1981 DIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE* AT SUNY, STONY BROOK, L.I. FEB 21-27, OPEN TO CERTIFIED DIVERS. THE COURSE WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A *NEW JERSEY WRECK DIVING TRIP, JUNE 21-22.*

NINE WRECK CHARTS FOR BETTER BOTTOM FISHING ARE NOW AVAILABLE FROM *WRECK CHART CO. BOX 1566, MAITLAND, FLA. 32751* AT $15.00 EACH, SHOWING ONCE SECRET U.S. GOVT. CHARTS OF 400 SHIPS SUNK OFF THE U.S. EAST COAST DURING WORLD WAR II FROM CANADA TO THE GULF OF MEXICO, INCLUDING 200 IN THE N.Y. BIGHT.

STRIPED BASS, IN TROUBLE ON THE EAST COAST, ARE THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK IN FRESHWATER RESERVOIRS AND LAKES. THE NEW BREED OF FRESHWATER STRIPER "SHARPIES", LIKE THEIR SALTWATER COUNTERPARTS, USE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT SUCH AS DEPTH FINDERS, FISH LOCATORS, WATER TEMPERATURE AND MOON TABLES.



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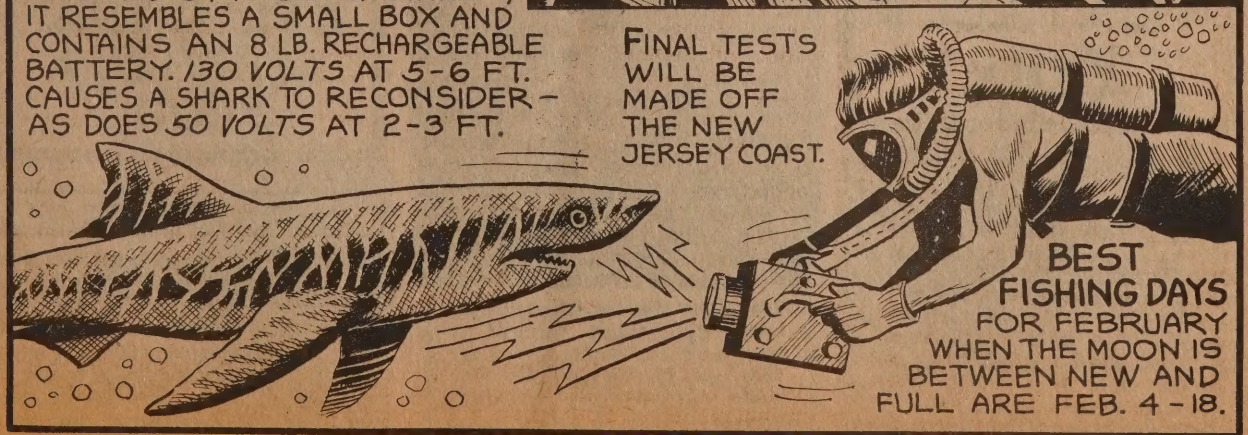

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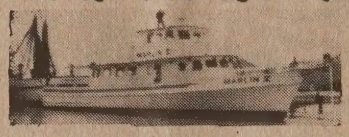

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Brian Leland of East Hampton hefts the 61½ lb. striper he took aboard his dad's boat Wood Chopper back in October. The huge cow, taken near Old Silas Rock, was checked in at Carl Darenberg's Montauk Marine Basin.

MONTAUK ★ BEST BET ★ COD

Captain Mike, skipper of the **Marlin IV** fished a piece of bottom south of the Point on Saturday and Sunday and found good fishing both days. Captain Mike said that some fares managed 10 to 20 cod apiece, although there were others aboard who didn't do nearly as well. Most of the fish are averaging over 10 lbs., with the pool fish in the 40 lb. class on each trip.

This large mutton snapper was taken by Dolores Schmitt of Northport on a recent trip to the Tortugas. She fished out of Key West aboard the "Viking Starship."

GREAT SOUTH BAY ★ BEST BET ★ COD

CAPTREE

The open boat **Speedy VII** has been able to sail on a regular basis for the past week, having missed only Friday. Fishing has been good all week, with most trips producing thirty to forty cod including quite a few in the 40-50 lb. class. The skipper has been fishing a particular offshore

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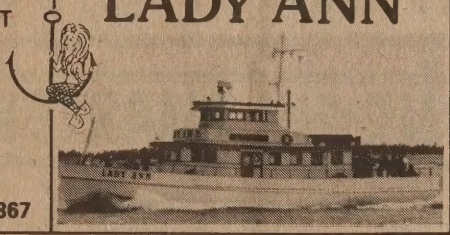

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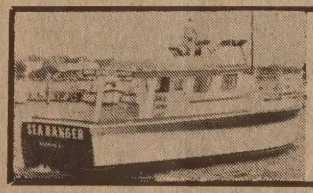

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Five-year-old Christine Deblasio shows off the fine fluke she caught on her first fishing trip. Subscriber photo.

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FISH TALK:

(Continued from page 9.)

the only problems marine life faces on the Chesapeake spawning grounds. Drought, pesticides, herbicides, increased boat traffic, oil spills, and the reduction of the size of the appropriate water shed that feeds and protects the Chesapeake Delta are all factors that are slowly killing the bay as a vastly productive spawning and nursery ground. Can we reverse the trend?

PROBABLY! Yes, if we are concerned enough to be willing to make and accept compromise, then we will be able to correct or improve those conditions that have brought about a decline in the vitality of the Chesapeake Bay complex. Can we afford to ban the use of chlorine? Probably not since doing so would expose human population centers to the danger of diseases such as typhoid, hepatitis, cholera, and others. However, is it necessary to use such high levels of chlorine? Is it necessary to use chlorine at all in the winter months when there is no swimming? Other societies have found that it isn't necessary to chlorinate all year-round and Maryland officials have suggested the seasonal ban on chlorine as a possible useful compromise. It is suggested that both the striped bass and the shad will be spawned long before the bathing season and the resumed use of chlorine. Perhaps such a law will give the fish a chance. Another alternative might be the investment of time and dollars to develop modern sewage and other waste treatment approaches. Sure, chlorine is easy to use, but it may not be the best method in the long run.

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wreck and fishing has been holding up as demonstrated by the catches. Sunday's trip produced 30 nice cod for those aboard.

Capt Sam of the charterboat **Eleanor** informs us that bookings are coming in early this year and choice dates are going quickly. He reminds charter customers to book as soon as possible to assure that they will get the best remaining dates.

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COD

FREEPORT

Capt Richie of the **Starstream II** says that due to the very cold water temperatures, due to the recent cold snap and the presently melting ice, the fishing has been tough this past week. Passengers did pick a few cod Saturday with drops being made on wrecks but mostly on open bottom.

Jack Hook of Bayside, Queens, recently returned from Acapulco where he put in three days of sailfishing. He experimented with the same Jet Lures and Green Machines which have been devastating on our local offshore scene, but found them no match for the fresh mullet used by the Mexican skippers. The rigged baits accounted for all 14 sails Jack landed. Largest was 180 lbs. (Pacific sail) and all were released except those injured while being fought. Jack runs the private boat "The Hook," of course!

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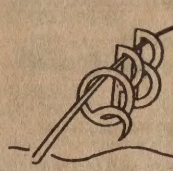

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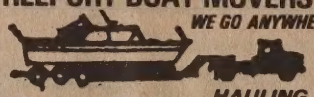

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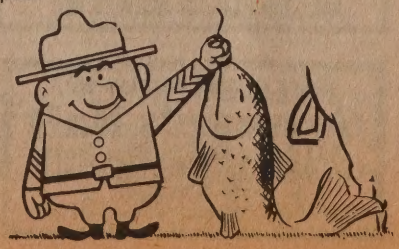
NATIONAL SCENE:

(Continued from page 6.)

new Administration would seem to be opposed to the continuance of this stupidity, the influence of the West Coast high seas tuna industry will probably continue to prevail—unless domestic sport and commercial fishermen get off their butts and start fighting for their rights!

During December, Southeast observers tagged 19 sharks (mostly blues), and ended up with a total of 632 sharks and 249 billfish tagged for the year. Ten Japanese vessels were expected to fish in the Atlantic in January, with another ten moving into the Gulf of Mexico for the beginning of the annual giant tuna slaughter during the spawning period. The law passed last year specifies that NMFS must have observers on every foreign longliner, but the "Southeast Observer News" noted that only six observers were on standby awaiting the ten longliners. It will be interesting to see if NMFS pays any more attention to the will of Congress in this Administration than it did in the past!



The wrecks have not been holding fish in recent trips. With water temperature a critical factor Richie points out that the fishing changes from day to day and he is constantly testing various drops. The bottom line is that catches can change from day to day and things might just open up at any time.

Capt Billy Lindroth of the **Capt Al** said that he's had atleast one fish on each drop on all trips sailed this week and weekend. Bill says the cod are scattered and are not schooled up so that its a fish here, a fish there, etc. Size is the big thing now says the skipper with big fish being taken. Sunday's score was 12 cod, 6 of which ran from 25 to 36 pounds with the remainder going from 10 to 15 lbs. The 36 lb. pool fish was caught by Al Kelly of Rockaway. Saturday's trip saw 8 cod bouncing on the steel deck, all of decent size. Bill has been fishing the Glorian Doris area. Wrecks have been producing poorly this week and open bottom is getting primary attention. Passengers caught 12 cod on Wednesday with another 12 fish being dropped due to the picky way that the cod have been hitting the clam baits. Big fish on Wednesday was a 35 pounder for Pete Wenkus of Howard Beach. Pete had 6 fish himself from 15 to 35 lbs. Thursday was a slow day with 4 cod taken but Friday bounced back with 15 cod coming over the rail. So there are plenty of cows around and Bill advises there is plenty of elbow room on the boat on weekday trips.

SHEEPSHEAD BAY

Charlie at **Mike's Tackle**, across from the Sheepshead Bay Fleet, tells us that the boats fishing whiting are getting about 15 whiting per man working at the Mud Hole. Headliner of the week was a 76 lb. cod taken on hook and line Wednesday at the Fingers by Louis Schobel on his own boat.

This 10 lb. chopper copped the pool for Jaiem Fleischmann on a fall trip aboard the "Lady Lil II." It was diamond jigged off of Norwalk.

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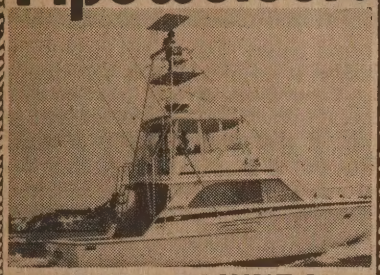

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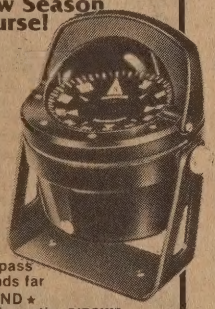

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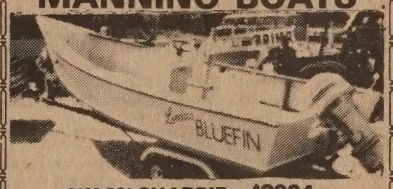

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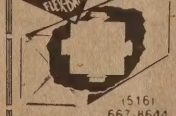

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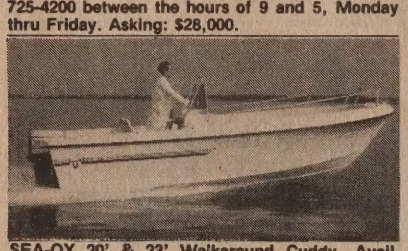

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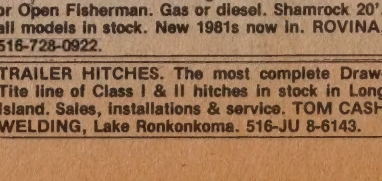

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OLD TIMER'S CORNER:

(Continued from page 12.)

he did things the hard way, for there was no pool for him or her that time.

Earlier I had said that I was not immune to the foolishness of doing things the hard way. And while I don't know if that lady angler of so long ago ever really allowed her husband to forget, I know one lady who doesn't let me forget the day I messed things up pretty well for her.

Back in 1940, my wife and I used to do a lot of skiff fishing for fluke. Most of this was done in the Far Rockaway/Atlantic Beach area. And there was some pretty good fluke fishing there those days, for never did we return home empty-handed. We always rented a skiff from Henning's (it was on the north side of the bridge then), and for a dollar and a quarter, we got a roomy, non-leak skiff and a quart of killies.

I'd row out into Reynold's Channel and dunk bait any place that "looked fishy," which might be east of the bridge or near the old Coast Guard Station. The choice actually mattered not, for wherever one dropped anchor, fluke made their presence known in a matter of minutes.

Contrary to popular practice, when my wife was along, I did no drifting. We were content to remain at anchor and lift a fluke aboard from time to time. It was delightful fishing. No rushing about helter-skelter. But this particular day I have in mind, things didn't turn out so delightful. I did it the hard way.

My wife seldom used a rod and reel when we skiff-fished, for she didn't need it. With the aid of an old beat-up dropline she not only caught many fluke, but there were times when she outfished me.

I recall rigging up my outfit first and it was then when I discovered I'd left behind most of my fluke rigs. Instead of having a dozen or more, I had but three. And one of these was not only ancient, but I couldn't remember where it had come from. Its silk wrappings were frayed with age, its gut leader speckled with rust spots. I shrugged my shoulders—and attached it to my wife's dropline.

Don't ask me why. I just did it. It's what's commonly called doing things the hard way. I'm sure I don't have to go on—you can guess what happened. My wife hooked one of those once-in-a-lifetime fluke and before I could get a net under it, that frayed wrapping let go. Goodbye fluke. It's forty years later now, but whenever I brag about hot-shot fluke fishermen, I'm forceably reminded of that experience. It has a calming effect.

I know there are readers of this column who have their own stories of doing things the hard way. If so, and you want to share them, get in touch with me at 39 King Street, Hampton Bays, New York 11946. I'll be glad to hear from you, and we'll kick it around a bit.

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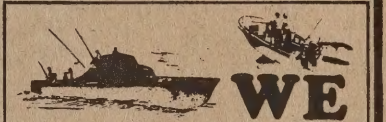

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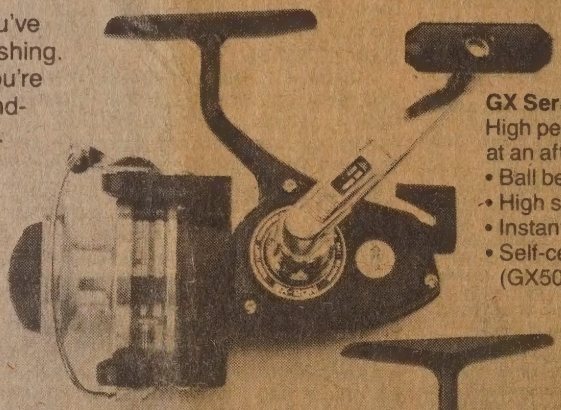

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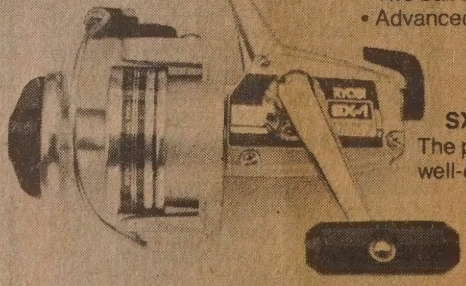

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